CHRISTIANITY

AND

RECENT SPECULATIONS.

Six Lectures

BY MINISTERS OF THE FREE CHURCH.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

ROBERT S. CANDLISH, D.D.,

PRINCIPAL OF THE NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

I DO not see much occasion for any preliminary remarks of mine to introduce this little volume to the public; nor have I indeed any thing of importance to say. But as my colleagues seemed to think that it fell to the senior member of the body to prepare some sort of opening statement on his own behalf and theirs, and as that was made a condition of the publication, I felt that necessity was laid upon me.

The delivery of this course of lectures was entirely matter of private arrangement among the lecturers themselves; there having been no official authorization from any quarter, nor even any general consultation of brethren. We thought it best to proceed upon our own responsibility, committing no one beyond our little circle to an approval either of our plan or of its execution. It was with some hesitation that we ventured on what I may call our experiment. But it turned out to be successful beyond our expectations. The crowded audiences who filled the church to overflowing consisted

largely, or rather almost entirely, of men, and young men, of the class we wished especially to reach. And their singularly close attention impressed all the lecturers.

A twofold inference may be drawn from this success.

In the first place, it is clear that something in the line of our movement is needed; something that will turn the Sabbath to account for more than what is held to be included under the ordinary conducting of public worship and the ordinary preaching of the gospel. Let me not be misunderstood. I have no faith in new plans and *panaceas* for improving on the old way of "beseeching men to be reconciled to God." And I deprecate, with all my heart, the introduction of scientific or literary discussions into the pulpit, under the guise of accommodation to modern thought. But, leaving untouched the stated Sabbath means of grace, as hereditarily handed down to us from our fathers, I cannot but think that we have opportunities on the Sabbath of, at least, occasional arguments and appeals, bearing on the questions that touch religion from without. I say occasional; for I believe that therein lies their safety and their strength.

Then, secondly, it is still more clear, that intelligent and thoughtful men, in the class to which I refer, are not only exercised on these subjects, but are willing, nay eager, to come and hear what the

defenders and expounders of revelation have to say. Provided only they know and understand that there is to be no attempt to put down inquiry, *brevi manu*, by the mere summary assertion of authority and imputation of heresy, they are prepared to give a fair hearing to us, if we merely show that we are as ready to receive the proved facts of science, as we ask them to be to receive the proved facts of Scripture. Their jealousy of theologians has often arisen out of an idea that theological *dicta* must override and overrule all scientific inquiries and results. Let them see that we face the question in a very different spirit; that we have something of the Baconian as well as the dogmatic mind in us; and that we hold sacred the facts and inferences of philosophy, physical and metaphysical, as having a distinct foundation of their own, not to be touched by indirect arguments from any other quarter. Of course, we ask the same admission to be made on the side of theological science. And there is this difference in our favour. We are quite prepared to let apparently antagonistic or contradictory conclusions, occurring in distinct spheres of discovery and thought, remain unexplained, if that must be so, for a time; to accept both, each on its own proper evidence; and to await the result of further disclosure on either side. Our opponents, on the other hand, are too often found prematurely pressing discrepancies, as though their attainments were so complete and final

as to warrant their insisting on making them the law, even within a sphere which in their own nature they do not touch. The former of these courses is surely the more philosophical in itself, as well as the more becoming, when our ignorance of many things in heaven and earth, and our partial information about all things, are taken into account. I think it will appear that it is the line taken in these lectures.

There is only one other remark I have to make, suggested specially by the first two lectures, and confirmed by the others. It is this. The real work such inquirers and thinkers have to do now, is to shew that there is absolutely and literally nothing new, either in the state of the question or in the mode of dealing with it, as regards the great controversy about the authority of the Bible, and its contents. The skill, and I must add the effrontery, with which our sceptical friends contrive to put a new face on an old phantom, and reproduce an old cavil in a new form, is beyond belief beforehand. I am mistaken if there is not something in these Lectures fitted to impress candid minds with this truth, though I cannot now illustrate or elaborate it.

R. S. C.

52 Melville Street,
March 7, 1866.

THE BIBLE NOT INCONSISTENT WITH SCIENCE.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS SMITH, M.A.,

MINISTER OF COWGATE-HEAD.

I.—The Bible not Inconsistent with Science.

When I was invited to take that part in this course of lectures which has been actually assigned to me, and to treat of the consistency between the declarations of the Bible and the discoveries of science in respect of those matters which are in any way touched upon by them in common, I shrank at first from the task, from a feeling and a fear that the undertaking of it would be regarded by many as implying a pretension to scientific attainments which I have no right to put forward, and to an acquaintance with the recent progress of science which the engagements of my life make it simply impossible that I should possess in any considerable degree of extensiveness or minuteness. I was, however, induced to consent to the arrangement proposed, mainly by the consideration that no such pretension is necessarily involved in the undertaking to discuss such a subject, since any one very moderately acquainted with science may treat it usefully and satisfactorily, inasmuch as the questions at issue, with a few exceptions, and these by no means the most important, relate to the general principles, and not to the minute details, of scientific discovery. I have nothing further to say by way of introduction,

except this ; that I requested that the subject of the lecture should be stated negatively, rather than positively ; so that I should not be pledged to show that there is any positive confirmation of any statements of the Bible by any discoveries made by science ; or, on the other hand, any considerable light cast upon the discoveries of the one by the statements of the other ; but only negatively, that there is no inconsistency betwixt the two, which should prevent our holding by both with perfect confidence.

From this it will appear that we propose to stand wholly on the defensive ; that it is no part of our undertaking to deduce any positive argument for the truth and divine inspiration of the Scriptures from any harmony that may be found to subsist between any of their statements on the one hand, and the conclusions of true science on the other. We have only to show negatively that there is no such force in the objections which have been made to the Scriptures, on the ground of supposed inconsistencies, as to require of us to reject them, or even to suspend our belief in them, until the supposed inconsistencies can be cleared away. If we succeed in doing this, we submit that it is no small service rendered to the cause of defence, since it allows the positive evidences derived from other quarters, to produce their legitimate and unimpaired effect.

It is true that we shall have occasion to allude to certain peculiarities in the manner in which the Bible occasionally touches upon scientific subjects, which might form the basis, if not of a positive argument, at least of a strong presumption that the finger of God is here, and that the human penmen must have been

guided by a wisdom far higher than their own. But we wish it to be distinctly understood that this is accidental rather than essential to our argument; which will be complete when we have shewn, as we trust to be able to shew conclusively, that there is nothing in the Bible in such wise inconsistent with any truth that is fairly ascertained by scientific research as to make it in the slightest degree improbable that the Bible is inspired by the omniscient God. If there be, over and above this, produced or strengthened an impression of the extreme unlikelihood, amounting in fact to a virtual impossibility, that so many men, living in so remote ages, could have written so large a book, of so diversified contents, without actually coming into collision with truths which have been only recently discovered by scientific men, unless they had been specially guided by Him to whom all truth is known, and all events foreknown—if such an impression be produced or confirmed, of course we shall be all the more satisfied; but we wish it to be distinctly understood at the outset that the production of such a positive impression or conviction, is more than, and is in fact different from, what we have undertaken.

And now, brethren, let us say that we feel very deeply the importance of our subject, and the responsibility, we may say the solemnity, of the position which we occupy; and let us impress upon you that this responsibility and solemnity it is yours to share with us. We come not here to an encounter of wits, a logical battle in which victory is to be sought at any cost, or by any means. It is not the battle of the warrior that is before us, whose confused noise, and

garments rolled in blood, might stir up the natural enthusiasm of the heart, the love of contest and the desire of victory, "and the stern joy which warriors feel, in foemen worthy of their steel." It is not our part, at least it is not our main part, to set ourselves against 'the oppositions of science, falsely so called,' but cordially accepting the conclusions of science, which we believe to be upon the whole sound, and cordially accepting the declarations of the Bible, as they are understood by common sense and intelligent scholarship, we have to act the part of peace-makers between the respective champions of those two classes of truths; and that not merely by urging upon them the rightness or expediency of mutual forbearance, but by demonstrating that they have positively no cause of quarrel.

We shall conduct our argument by laying down certain propositions, and proving or illustrating them as they may seem severally to require.

I. First of all, then, we call you to observe, that the Bible is written in ordinary language, such as is used by men in their common intercourse with one another. This seems to be at once so unquestionably the fact, and at the same time so essentially necessary to the very idea of a revelation addressed to mankind, and fitted to be of any practical value to them, that it seems strange that it should require even to be stated as a step in our argument. It is manifest, that if any other course were adopted, it would necessarily involve one or other of these two inconveniences; either that constant explanations must be given, which from the very nature of the case, would be utterly

unintelligible to a great proportion of those for whom the Bible is unquestionably designed; or else, that being left without such explanations, it would be utterly useless for all but those who understood the peculiar language employed, who would be simply none at all in many ages and countries, and very few in any. In either case, the Bible must wait for the fulfilment of its manifest purpose, not only until scientific discoveries were perfected, but until they were so popularized that the technical language in which they were described was universally understood; and this is certainly not the case in this latter half of the 19th century, and we are pretty safe in predicting that it never will be the case. Let us just imagine an example of the jargon that must be substituted for the simple energetic language of the Bible if it were translated into the technical phraseology of modern science. Take the plain text in the epistle of James, "The sun is no sooner risen with burning heat." This would have to be expressed in some such way as the following, in order to satisfy the demands of our modern astronomical science, "The earth has no sooner rotated on her axis sufficiently to bring the horizon of a place into such a position that its plane will cut the heavens at a lower elevation than the sun's!" Even this would not indeed satisfy the demands of astronomy, for the question would arise whether the elevating effects of refraction, and the depressing effects of parallax were or were not taken into account! But suppose this difficulty were got over, and the expression were allowed to be upon the whole correct astronomically, there is a far greater difficulty behind with respect to the theories of heat and combustion,

and the phraseology must be modified to suit the ways in which modern chemistry accounts for the phenomenon which is popularly called "burning heat." We desire to avoid every train of remark which the most scrupulous might regard as unsuitable to the place and the day; but really we know of no weapon but ridicule wherewith to assail what is simply and only ridiculous.

Certainly the philosophers have no right to find fault with the Bible on the ground that it uses the language of common men and of common sense in alluding to natural phenomena; for they uniformly follow the same course, not only in their intercourse with unphilosophic men, but in their communications with one another also, excepting, of course, when they have occasion actually to set forth the realities, or what they suppose to be the realities, as distinct from the appearances.

While the overlooking of this very obvious principle has been the cause of a very large amount of the supposition of discrepancy between the Bible and science, it ought, we think, in fairness to be admitted that the advocates of revelation have been more pertinacious in their opposition to it than the advocates of science. It was clearly through this oversight that Galileo was constrained to abjure his belief in the Copernican system, and on his knees to declare that the earth stands still, while on his feet he uttered the memorable speech which has passed into a proverb, *It does move, notwithstanding.* Of course we impute this humiliating scene exclusively to Romish bigotry and intolerance; and no doubt the recantation, under the threat of perpetual imprisonment or death, was en-

tirely a Romish procedure ; but it ought, in fairness, to be stated that the Protestants of those days equally charged the adherents of the Copernican system with infidelity, because they held that the earth moves, and the sun is stationary, in manifest contradiction, as was alleged, of the declaration of the nineteenth Psalm, that the sun "goeth forth from his chamber in the one end of heaven and circleth to the other end thereof." In proof of this we need only mention that in an excellent Commentary on the prophet Habakkuk, just reprinted in this city, there are several pages devoted to the enforcement of this charge. We have considerable respect for the scrupulousness which led the divines of that age, Romanist and Protestant alike, to stand up so strenuously as they did for the absolute literal truth of every statement in the Bible, and the absolute literal accuracy of every one of its allusions. They understood, as well as we, that in ordinary human language, all kinds of figures are admissible, but they seem to have thought that it is inconsistent with the idea of inspiration that it should express anything but absolute truth, and in absolutely unfigurative language. How this imagination could have stood with the fact, of which they could not but be cognizant, and of which their writings afford abundant proofs that they were cognizant, that the Bible does contain an immense amount of manifestly figurative language, and that in point of fact all its descriptions of the actings of Jehovah, the sight of his eyes, the hearing of his ears, the outstretching of his arm, must, from the very necessity of the case, be figurative, it is not very easy to understand. It is certain that more correct ideas are all but universal

now amongst the advocates of the plenary inspiration of the Bible by the God of truth. You may indeed still meet, as we have met, with a modern treatise on unfulfilled prophecy in which it is gravely maintained that there is to be erected upon this earth a city, 12,000 furlongs long, 12,000 furlongs broad, and 12,000 furlongs high! and you may occasionally meet, in reading or hearing, with an exposition of the last verse of John's Gospel disfigured with a laboured calculation, showing how much parchment, spread out, would cover the habitable part of the surface of the globe; whereas the expositor ought at once, we will not say to confess, but to declare and maintain, that the Evangelist, under the influence of inspiration, made the statement that he supposed the world would not contain the books which would suffice to record all the mighty works and gracious words of our Lord, in precisely the same sense in which any uninspired man might have made the same statement; and that inspiration on any other principle would have been a great evil instead of a great blessing, inasmuch as its interpretation would become a simple impossibility.

We have dwelt longer upon our first proposition than its importance with reference to the present state of the controversy may seem to require. It certainly was in the past, much more than in the present, that the neglect of it led to antagonism between men of science and defenders of the Bible as the inspired word of God; yet it has not lost its importance as a principle, whether of Scripture interpretation or Scripture defence, and it is quite possible that it may be the ground on which the adjustment of some apparent differences is yet to be effected. It is manifestly no part

of our present duty to protest against any actual or possible perversion or abuse of this principle, whether viewed as a principle of interpretation or of defence. If it is sound, neither the fact nor the possibility of its being perverted or misapplied can make it false; and it is for its sound application, and not for its perversion, that we contend.

II. Our second proposition is that the Bible was manifestly not intended to teach us scientific truth. It never does formally teach anything relating to science at all, and the only way in which it ever touches upon scientific matters is by incidental allusions, in the course of statements with respect to matters altogether different, and, we will venture to say, unspeakably more important. This is a principle which is manifest on the very face of the Bible, and yet it has been directly contravened by many in almost every age. You may have heard how the Kabbalists amongst the Jews not only held, as we do, that the Bible is all true; but they held also this other and very different doctrine, which is not true, that the Bible contains all truth. In order to make this out they expended an amazing amount of perverted and misapplied ingenuity, assuming that there is a hidden mystery not only in every sentence but in every word and letter of the sacred book, and giving a loose rein to their fancy in constructing amazing systems of science, philosophy and theology, which being composed of nothing, necessarily were potentially nothing. Some of the early Christian fathers showed a tendency in the same direction; and the Rosicrucians and other mystics of the middle ages busied themselves in the

same manner, torturing the word of God to make it bear testimony to their vain fancies respecting the nature and order of the universe. In almost all ages there has been exhibited a revival of this idea in one form or another; and in our own country, not very long before our own times, it was reduced into a sort of system, under the title of the Hutchisonian doctrine. Disciples of this school are still occasionally to be met with; we have happened to know several very enthusiastic ones. Now the so constant recurrence of this idea, under so widely different circumstances, would seem to indicate that there is naturally an expectation in the minds of men that a divine revelation should contain an authoritative exposition of science and philosophy. It therefore becomes necessary to examine this expectation; and we think that we are prepared to show that it is in the highest degree unreasonable.

First, it is not at first sight an unnatural supposition, that a revelation of scientific truth would have been a strong recommendation of the Bible to the acceptance of man, and would have served a most valuable purpose as an evidence of its divine inspiration. We are fully convinced that it would have been just the contrary. Suppose such a book brought to a man ignorant of science, and that it began with a statement of the truth, that the earth is never at rest, but is constantly whirling round its own axis, and at the same time revolving in an elliptical orbit round the sun. Is it not evident that that man would consider himself both entitled and bound to reject it at once, as containing a statement which he knew to be utterly false? Bnt suppose it were brought to a man

who by study had acquired a knowledge of the true theory of the earth's motion, or to a community, such as ours, throughout which there is diffused a general knowledge of that theory, and a general assent to it. Is it not certain that when such a man or such a community found in an old book a statement of the theory which had been arrived at amongst them, as the result of a long process of study and investigation, their inference would simply be, that the author of the book had anticipated the discoveries of Copernicus, Kepler, and others, and had arrived at the theory by a similar process of investigation to that which had conducted them to it. We are confident, therefore, that neither in the case of ignorant men, nor in that of well instructed and enlightened men, would such an announcement have had any value whatever as an evidence of divine revelation; and just as little would it have had in the case of men in any intermediate state between complete ignorance and full knowledge.

Secondly, as to the matter of the revelation itself, it seems to us very clear, that the mixing up of scientific with religious truth, would have greatly marred the catholicity, damaged the beauty, and lessened the utility of the Bible. Physical science, from the very necessity of the case, must be, in a great degree, of the earth, earthly; and it is a great matter that in the Bible we have our eyes turned constantly and undistractedly to the great theme of salvation through the shed blood, imputed righteousness, and indwelling Spirit of the Son of God. We know how apt we all are to degrade this grand theme from the place which it occupies in the Bible, and to regard it practically, if not theoretically, not as *the* truth, in comparison of

which all other truths are of insignificant importance, but merely as *a* truth, co-ordinate with, or even subordinate to, multitudes of others. How much more liable should we have been to such a perversion, if the Bible itself had been so framed as to give countenance to such an idea? As we cannot but feel that it was with our blessed Lord Himself, that His glory as a teacher of righteousness, and the Saviour of men, stood out in all the brighter relief, that it was not associated in the days of His flesh with any other glory, that He is all the more "the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely," in proportion as He "grows up as a tender plant, and a root out of a dry ground," "without form or comeliness, or any beauty that we should desire Him," so we feel with respect to the Bible. Some of you may remember a grand passage in Pascal's Thoughts, in which he distinguishes three orders of greatness, viz., physical, intellectual, and moral greatness, or the greatness of holiness. The carnal Jews expected the Messiah to come in the merely animal greatness of a conqueror, leading forth an irresistible army against the hosts of Rome, bathing His sword in the blood of His enemies, dethroning Cæsar, and transferring the seat of empire from Rome to Jerusalem. The Samaritans would appear to have had somewhat more refined ideas, and to have fixed their thoughts more upon intellectual greatness. Their expectation was, that when the Messias came He would teach them all things. But when He came His utterances were such as these, "I must be about my Father's business." "Who made me a judge or a divider among you?" "My kingdom is not of this world." "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and

how am I straitened until it be accomplished?" Now, what we maintain is this, that as the glory of the incarnate Word, as the appointed king of a kingdom not of this world, would have been rather tarnished than rendered more illustrious by the addition of political or intellectual sovereignty, so it is in its measure with the glory of the written word. It gives "laws from heaven for life on earth;" but that is only because earth is, by the incarnation, and life and death of the Son of God, made one with heaven, as man is made one with God, and they who are crucified with Christ nevertheless live, and the life which they now live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them, and gave Himself for them, and their life is hid with Christ in God.

Then, *thirdly*, as to the influence of an authoritative exposition of scientific truth upon science itself, a little reflection will show that it would have been most injurious to it, in fact destructive of it as science. Its very essence consists in investigation, and that investigation must be altogether free from authoritative restraints. We all know that there was, and could be, no real science as long as men subjected themselves to the authority of Aristotle, and that not because Aristotle or the Aristotelians taught erroneous doctrines, but because the receiving of any doctrines on authority was inconsistent with the very conditions on which alone science can exist. Accordingly Bacon gave existence to science, not by teaching truth in opposition to Aristotelian errors, for he taught very little positive truth at all, and his writings contain probably as many errors as do those of Aristotle; but he gave being to science, because he disclaimed the

authority of Aristotle, and taught men that they must study nature, observe her actings, and deduce her laws from an extensive observation of her processes. To make this all the clearer to such as may not have had occasion to think of this subject, let us just look for a moment at the simplest of all the sciences, viz., the mathematical. Suppose that in teaching the elements of geometry, instead of placing before the learner the steps and processes by which the propositions are proved, and requiring him to go over every step of the proof, and make it, so far as possible, an act of his own mind; suppose that instead of this we were to place before him only the enunciations of the propositions, and assure him that they are all true, and that he must believe them ;—could we by any possibility take a more effective mode of securing that he should never become a mathematician? Now it is at least equally so with respect to the more complicated branches of science, and the evil would be still greater if we were required to receive them on the more constraining and unquestionable authority of a divine revelation.

Let us now point out how this consideration bears upon our general subject. It is fitted to modify, and as we believe, to correct, the expectation which many have formed, and which probably all of us have a natural tendency to form, of finding many confirmations of Bible statements in the results of scientific research. It is very common to say that the book of nature and the book of revelation, being the works of one and the same author, must necessarily bear marks of that common authorship. Now this is true ; but then it must not be forgotten that, if they may both

be called books, they are books on entirely different subjects. While, therefore, we may confidently expect that they shall not contain statements or sentiments mutually contradictory, we have clearly no right to expect that they should contain any considerable portion of matter in common. We question if any critic could have found out, from internal evidences alone, that the "Treatise on the Freedom of the Will," and the "Narrative of Revivals in New England" are the products of one mind; yet no one ever thought of doubting that Jonathan Edwards wrote them both. Now if this be fair and reasonable, and if aught else would be unreasonable and unfair, in judging of the writings of a human author, whose ideas and knowledge and modes of expression are necessarily limited; of course it is abundantly more so with respect to the Divine author, who is far less likely to repeat himself, being able, out of his infinite resources, to introduce into his works a variety no less than infinite.

A positive service which we think that this part of our argument renders to the cause, is one that we had in view when we said in our introduction, that there might arise a positive evidence, or at least a strong presumption, of the divine inspiration of the Bible, from some parts of our argument. We have seen how general is the expectation, that a divine revelation should contain a system of science. Those who have professed to be the vehicles of revelation have known of the existence of this expectation in others, and have been conscious of it in themselves; and all of them, with the exception of the writers of the Bible, have undertaken to fulfil that expectation. Accordingly,

we find that both the Vedas and the Puranas of the Hindoos, the Zendavesta of Zoroaster, the sacred books of the Chinese, the Koran of Mohammed, as well as the miserable and blasphemous utterances of the Mormonites, the Clairvoyants, and the Spiritualists of our own day, are filled with statements of the views of their several authors, respecting the constitution and laws of the physical world. Now, to us it does appear that the fact, that no one of the fifty writers of the Bible has given forth a single utterance of his views on any of these subjects, is altogether unaccountable on any supposition but one; and that one is, that these men wrote not according to the unprompted and unrestrained tendencies of their own minds, but that they wrote under the influence of the supernatural guidance of the Spirit of God, which we call inspiration.

III. Our next proposition is, that the past relations between the Bible and science are fitted to inspire the advocates of inspiration with confidence. From the days when the infidel sadducees disputed with our blessed Lord, from the time when the synagogue of the Libertines arose and disputed with Stephen, from the time when the Epicureans and Stoics encountered with Paul on Mars Hill, we have had a long succession of Celsuses, and Porphyries, and Cardans, who have from time to time waged a desultory guerilla warfare with the gospel and the Bible, until the siege was regularly laid to the citadel by the Encyclopedists of France, in the end of the past century and beginning of the present. While we may, and do regret, that so much fine talent was wasted, and far worse

than merely wasted, while we regret that the minds of Christians have been disturbed, and the minds of enquirers distracted, by objections of which they could not estimate the value or the force, we have only cause for rejoicing, that the Bible has come out of every encounter unwounded and unsullied. We remember at the distance of thirty years, and shall not forget if we live thirty more, the thrill with which we heard from the lips of Dr. Chalmers, a burst of noble eloquence on this subject, which now forms part of the preface to vol. v. of his Works. We must confine our quotation to the concluding sentences. "We are not aware of a single science in the vast Encyclopædia of human knowledge, which has not, in some shape or other, been turned, by one or more of its perverse disciples, into an instrument of hostility against the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, it too has an evidence of its own, alike unassailable, and beyond the reach of violence from without. It is not by the hammer of the mineralogist that this evidence can be broken. It is not by the telescope of the astronomer that we can be made to descry in it any character of falsehood. It is not by the knife of the anatomist that we can find our way to the alleged rottenness which lies at its core. Most ridiculous of all, it is not by his recently invented cranioscope that the phrenologist can take the dimensions of it, and find them to be utterly awanting. And lastly may it be shown that it is not by a dissecting metaphysics that the philosopher of the human mind can probe his way to the secret of its insufficiency, and make exposure to the world of the yet unknown flaw which incurably vitiates and irreparably condemns either the proofs or the subject-

matter of the Christian faith. All these sciences have at one time or other, cast their missiles at the stately fabric of our Christian philosophy and erudition; but they have fallen impotent at its base. They have offered insult, but done no injury, save to the defenceless youth whose principles they have subverted, or to those men of ambitious vanity, yet imperfect education, whose 'little learning is a dangerous thing.'" If the noble author of this passage had been still spared to lift up his grand voice in the midst of us, we can well imagine the splendid indignation with which he would have rebuked the presumption of the bishop of Natal, in bringing to the encounter with this hero of a thousand victories the squared ranks of the multiplication table, fondly dreaming that the Christian faith, like a wearied House of Commons, could be simply counted out! We can imagine the high-souled withering scorn with which he would have cast off and cast back the foul insult offered by a few of the physiologists and anthropologists of our day, who would put our faith out of countenance by the grinnings of the chimpanzee, or frighten it out of being by the roarings of the gorilla!

IV. That our augury of the future from the history of the past is not too sanguine, we think we shall be able to make apparent, under a fourth proposition, which is, that the objections now made by science against the Bible are neither numerous nor formidable. In order to evince this, we shall briefly allude to what may be called the outstanding objections propounded in connection with the several sciences. Probably most of you expected that we should occupy

the whole or the greater part of our lecture with this, and may be disappointed that we only bring it in at the close; but we have thought it better to dwell upon principles than to enter very minutely into details.

We mention first astronomy, because it is at once the noblest, and the exactest, and most accurate of the sciences. One charge connected with the *history* of this science has been most satisfactorily demonstrated by the science itself to have been unfounded. We allude to the conclusions that were deduced from the Hindoo and Chinese astronomical tables regarding chronology. The Hindoo tables profess to contain records of astronomical observations from 3102 years B.C., or about 700 years before the flood. Now we have the unhesitating testimony, not of an ignorant advocate of inspiration, but of Laplace himself, that these records are entirely spurious, that their errors show them to have been calculated back from a comparatively recent date. It is also certain that by far the oldest of the Hindoo astronomical treatises makes mention of a city called Romaka, far to the west of India. There can be no reasonable doubt that the reference is to Rome, and consequently that the *Surjya Siddhanta* was not written until the days of Rome's greatness.

Some astronomers have objected to the miracle recorded in the book of Joshua, of the standing still of the sun and the moon, that this would have deranged the whole cosmical order of the universe. Now we might say that the question just reduces itself to the other question, whether there can be a miracle at all. If God could work the miracle as described, he could

surely obviate the inconveniencies that might have ensued from it. But it is remarkable that the objection proceeds upon an erroneous assumption altogether. It is assumed that for the production of the phenomenon it was necessary that the earth's revolution round the sun should be suspended, whereas all that was required was a suspension of her rotation on her axis. This would not affect the other bodies of the system at all, and if the rotation were brought to a stay somewhat gradually, would not even produce any concussion on the earth's surface. Of course, there is nothing in the record inconsistent with the supposition that this miracle might be in the department of optics rather than in that of astronomy. It is quite supposable that a change in the atmosphere, effected by the command of God, may have caused it to reflect the sun and moon after they were actually below the horizon.

But a more serious, because a more fundamental objection than this has been brought against the Bible and the gospel in connection with this science. It is to the effect that astronomy has so evinced the stupendous magnitude of the universe, as to make it inconceivable that the Son of God should have been incarnate, and should have died under the curse, for the redemption of inhabitants of one of the smallest and most insignificant of its worlds. You know that this is the objection which Dr Chalmers dealt with in his wonderful Astronomical Sermons, and dealt with it so as to leave it no logical standing-place. We shall only say regarding this matter that it *is* wonderful, passing all wonder; but this only shews the more distinctly that the love of God passeth all understanding. It is nowise inconsistent with the scriptural re-

presentation of the matter, which tells us that Christ laid not hold of the angelical nature, but of the seed of Abraham, and even amongst the inhabitants of earth themselves he chooseth not the great, the mighty, the learned, the noble; but "he hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath he chosen, yea, things which are not, to bring to nought things which are, that no flesh should glory in his presence."

It is only now, when we come to notice the geological objections to the narrative of the creation, that we are disposed to regret the plan that we have adopted in this lecture, as we should have particularly liked, and we believe it would have been instructive, to notice them in some detail. We dare not, however, presume upon your patience further than to glance at the past history and present state of the controversy. For a time after geological observations began to be systematically made, the students of the science were divided into two classes—those who argued that the crust of the globe presents numberless indications that it must have been created at a period greatly more remote than the Scripture chronology would seem to indicate, and those who held that the strata afford confirmations of the Scripture account of the six days' work; while the fossils embedded in them, and especially the remains of marine animals found at great elevations, furnish a demonstration of the universal deluge recorded in the Scriptures. But the arguments in favour of the former view gradually accumulated until they commanded all but the universal assent of geo-

logists. It is now admitted by all intelligent men that the matter of our globe was called into being very much more than 6000 years ago, and the books that were written at the commencement of the controversy on Scriptural Geology have fallen into oblivion. But two modes of interpreting the narrative of the first chapter of Genesis were suggested, which had each, and which have even to this day, their several defenders. They are inconsistent with each other, and cannot be both correct; but we think we may say that there is no intelligent man now who does not believe that the one or the other is correct. The one is that which supposes the six days of the creation to have been long periods of time. We do not know who was the first propounder of this theory. We first met with it in the writings of the late Dr Stanley Faber, whose immense learning and wonderful ingenuity converted us to the acceptance of it. This theory the late Hugh Miller may be said to have made peculiarly his own. He defended it with an amount of geological science, and illustrated it with a radiance of poetical beauty, such as were probably never before united in a scientific work. The other theory was propounded by Dr. Chalmers just half a century ago, and has been adopted and advocated by Buckland, Sedgwick, and other eminent geologists. According to this view, the narrative in the first chapter of Genesis divides itself into two, or perhaps more properly into three parts. The first verse tells us that *in the beginning*, that is, at some period which may be indefinitely remote, the heavens and the earth were created by the word of God. Then the second verse informs us that at a subsequent

period the earth was reduced to a state of chaos, it may be, by some convulsion, which may not have been the first, or the tenth, or the hundredth which had taken place from "the beginning;" and that then the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, to convert the *chaos* once more into a *cosmos*, and then the arrangement of the present order of things began and was completed in six days. It cannot be denied that this *may be* the meaning of the Scriptural narrative, and when we become a little accustomed to contemplate it in this light, it not only seems to do no violence to the narrative, but to be in fact its most natural interpretation. The historian has to do not with the earth either in its astronomical or geological relations, but simply as the habitation of man, whose history he is to record. A single sentence suffices to account for the earth's being in existence, and another to account for the necessity of a new organisation of it; and then he proceeds to give an account of this organisation, with which alone his subject gave him any concern. It is quite evident that either of these modes of interpretation completely neutralizes the geological objection as it then was, inasmuch as, according to the one, all the changes which geology shews to have taken place in the earth's crust may have occurred *during* the six periods which the author of the Book of Genesis calls *days;* and according to the other, they may have occurred in the interval which elapsed *between* the beginning, when the matter of the earth was created, and the first of the six days when that matter began to be arranged substantially as we now find it.

Neither is it any good argument against the truth

of the Scriptural narrative, that geology proves that there was death in the world numberless ages before man was in it, whereas the Bible represents that death is the wages of sin, that it was the sin of man that made the creation subject to vanity, that "brought death unto the world, and all our woe." It was indeed the sin of man that brought death into *his* world, which is *our* world, but why may not there have been sin in the previous worlds which were constructed of the same materials, but of which the Bible gives no account? Yea, does not the Bible itself allude in the very next chapter to sin existing somewhere in the universe before the creation of man, and why may it not have been committed in the earth that then was? May not the earth in some one of its previous conditions have been the habitation of Satan and his hosts, and may not this have been one reason of his fell malignity against those who succeeded him in his tenancy? Is it not possible that both the angels that fell, and the angels that stood, may have had their dwelling-place during a period of probation in this province of their Lord's boundless dominions; and that those who stood may have been removed into a place where God's presence is more specially manifested, prepared for them and for the redeemed of men before the foundation of the world, where they have been made secure for ever in virtue of the covenant established with Him, of whom the whole family both in heaven and in earth is named, and whose prerogative it is, by the appointment of his Father, to "gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven and which are in earth," even Him, "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance,

being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" while those who fell, even the devil and his angels, were hurried off to a place of outer darkness, a lake of everlasting fire, prepared for them by their offended Lord? May not the song of the morning stars, and the shout of the sons of God, when they saw the earth prepared for the habitation of men, have been all the more jubilant because its creation was substantially the refitting of an abode endeared to them by innumerable blissful associations? May not the malignity of the tempter have been intensified and envenomed by the thought that the new race was to occupy the place which he had once regarded as peculiarly his own? This is of course only speculation, and we found no argument upon it.

When the modes of interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis to which we have referred were propounded, it was admitted by the common consent of geologists, that the existence of man upon the earth is comparatively of recent date, and so far, science was understood to confirm rather than contradict the scriptural narrative. It is only within a few months that a geologist of any note has ventured to assail this position, and we venture to assert that a feebler assault was never made. We have no hesitation in saying, that Sir Charles Lyell's book on the Antiquity of man is one of the most un-Baconian productions that ever proceeded from a scientific man. One premise in each of his twenty arguments is indeed a fact, but the other is an assumption, and all of these assumptions are purely gratuitous, while several are notoriously and demonstrably false.

Closely akin in their intention and in their character to the geological arguments of Sir Charles Lyell for the antiquity of man, are those which Bunsen and others have founded upon Egyptian monuments and inscriptions. They are simply bold assertions, and wild conjectures, without any foundation to rest upon, supported by the process of collecting and magnifying all evidence that seems to support a foregone conclusion, and resolutely excluding all that tends to overthrow that conclusion. It will be admitted, that there could not be a more unexceptionable judge on this subject, than the late Sir G. C. Lewis, and with a sentence or two from him we shall dismiss the subject. "Egyptology," says Sir George, "has a historical method of its own. It recognizes none of the ordinary rules of evidence; the extent of its demands upon our credulity is almost unbounded. Even the writers on ancient Italian ethnology are modest and tame in their hypotheses, compared with the Egyptologists. Under their potent logic all identity disappears, every thing is subject to become any thing but itself. Successive dynasties become contemporary dynasties; [contemporary become successive?]; one king becomes another king, or several other kings, or a fraction of another king; one name becomes another name, one number becomes another number, one place becomes another place." May we not safely affirm, that it is not weapons such as these, forged in the work-shop of a diseased brain, composed of the materials whereof sick men's dreams are made, that shall ever prosper against our faith or its records?

When we were speaking of astronomical objections, we passed over in silence what was called the nebular

hypothesis, which held that the universe consisted originally of atoms or particles of matter in a state of fire-dust or nebula, that this matter was in the course of millions of ages collected by the action of gravitation into masses, which gradually formed themselves into worlds and systems, and that upon the surfaces of these worlds plants and animals were formed by the action of similar laws; that this process has been going on probably for millions of millions of years, and is going on still. We passed over this in silence, because it has not only been long abandoned as an astronomical theory, but has been abundantly confuted by the advance of astronomical knowledge, and particularly by the increased power of our modern telescopes, which show that the nebulæ are not fire-dust out of which suns and worlds are to be made, but suns actually shining in countless numbers and amazing splendour. We refer to the theory now, because of its close connection with that of Lamarck, who held that all varieties of plants and animals had been developed from a monad by a process of wishing, continued through innumerable ages. Thus a particle of inert matter longed for life, and became a moss; the moss became a sponge, half vegetable, half animal; wishing for a protection from the dashing waves it made for itself shell, and became a limpet; disliking its confinement on a rock, it longed for means of locomotion, it got free, and became a fish; wishing to see what was doing in other elements, it longed for wings, and became first a flying fish, and then a bird. Finding that its wings, while admirably fitted for motion through the air, were not suited to aid materially its progress upon earth, it got them converted into legs and feet, in

addition to the two that it had before. But while the bird could fly, and the quadruped could run, neither of them was very specially fitted for climbing, and so the four feet were converted into four hands. Then however, it was found that a mistake had been committed. Hands were, doubtless, very good things, but there might be too many of them, especially if they were purchased at the expense of feet, and so the monkey exchanged two of his hands for feet, while he retained the other two, and so he became a man. It was only further necessary that he should get a soul, and that also he got by wishing for it. We are not sure that anybody ever seriously believed in this theory, or regarded it as aught else than an ingenious mode of exhibiting, by way of fable or allegory, the singular analogies that pervade the vegetable and animal kingdoms. But a few years ago both the nebular theory of astronomy, and the development theory of species, were set forth anew in a book which excited a considerable amount of attention at the time of its publication, the "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation." Since that time the theory of the transmutation of species, which is just Lamarck's theory of development, divested of some of its more ridiculous aspects, has been advocated with great ingenuity by Dr Darwin, while Mr Huxley and others have attempted, in confirmation of it, to prove the generic identity of man with the higher order of monkeys. Now, in answer to all this, it is enough to say that there is not a single fact on which the hypothesis rests. There is no record of any one of all the innumerable changes which the hypothesis requires. True, they are supposed to require innumerable ages for

their perfecting, but in every particular age there ought to be many in all stages of progress. How is it then that we do not find them actually beginning, and going on and terminating? It is easy to suppose that such an order of things might have been, but it is abundantly certain that it is not the actually existing order of things.

We have been speaking of a hypothesis which dispenses with Adam altogether; we need do no more than refer to one which requires a dozen Adams. Dr Darwin's theory would make all the races of man of one species originally with the monkeys, the other would make each of the varieties of the human race a distinct species, descended from a different ancestor. This theory was confessedly originated in America with a view to getting rid of the "difficulty," with respect to the negro race; and as that difficulty has been happily got over otherwise, the theory itself will pass away and be forgotten. We cannot but mention, however, how satisfactorily it is confuted, and the Scriptural history of the unity of mankind, and the dispersion at Babel, is confirmed by another science, the science of philology. Such men as Bopp and Max Muller have established, on a demonstrative basis, that the languages of men were originally one, and that they were broken into several by a violent and sudden cause. These several have branched out gradually into all the different dialects that have been spoken in the world.

Thus, brethren, have we shown that there is no inconsistency between the Bible and true science. Any supposed inconsistencies that we have not noticed, we

have not shrunk from because they were too formidable to be grappled with, but because they were too trifling to deserve notice. We have done more than this. We have shown that it is infant science alone, that is to say imperfect and inaccurate science, that is inconsistent with the Bible, while, in proportion as science is corrected, it is brought round to harmony with the holy oracles. Thus we may apply to the Bible what Lord Bacon said, long ago, respecting natural religion and the existence of God; "A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." And now we conclude, as we are quite conscious that we ought to have done ere now, by suggesting two reflections of a practical character.

1. The first is this: that we are not to hold by our Bible as in a state of suspense, as if the next morning's newspaper, or the next month's scientific magazine might tear it from our grasp, and prove to us that it is no Bible at all. We have strenuously excluded from our discussion the argument from authority; but here, we think, it may legitimately find a place. It would be no answer to any particular objection from astronomy, to say that Newton was, and that Herschell is, a believer in the Bible; or to any particular geological objection, to assert that Hugh Miller read with as much reverence the word of God as he did the works of God; or to any particular objection, derived from physiology, to say that John Abercrombie regarded it as no less an honour to be a humble learner in the school of Christ, than to be a great teacher of all that man can discover of the mysteries of man's being; or to any particular objec-

tion derived from the department of chemistry, to say that George Wilson found in the simple faith of Christ a peace in the midst of his sore sufferings which the world, with all its mines of knowledge open, could not give; but we submit that it is a fair inference from such facts as these, with reference to objections of whose force we have not the means of judging, that we may wait with perfect security for the adjustment of differences which did not prevent these, and such-like men, from being at once very "learned and very pious."

2. Our second reflection may be attached to this very expression which we have just employed. It is that there is no foundation for the prevalent idea that there is a natural antagonism between scientific pursuits and religion, and that religious men look with some sort of jealousy upon the votaries of science. No; we know that ignorance is not the mother of any devotion that is worthy of the name. We wish very earnestly that all the learned were devout, and we wish, if it were possible, that all the devout were learned too. We know there is such a thing as unsanctified knowledge, but we know there is such a thing also as unsanctified ignorance; and without caring to decide which of these two is worse, we have no scruple or difficulty in averring that at all events sanctified knowledge is far better than even sanctified ignorance. We hail and rejoice in the advance of science, not only because we hold that knowledge is in itself far better than ignorance, civilisation than barbarism; but, in addition, because we are persuaded that every advance in science, by whomsoever made, shall be in the end an additional contribution to the

glory of our exalted Lord. When the kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents unto him, and the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, when all kings shall fall down before him, there shall not be wanting those true kings of men, those men of ruling intellect, who, according to Lord Bacon's description of the highest end of science, have contributed to the recovery of man's lost dominion over nature. The anthem of praise which, arising from a multitude whom no man can number, shall be like the ceaseless roar of ocean's ever-rolling waves, shall be composed not wholly of the untutored accents of the tenants of the rock, but with these shall be mingled in sweetest symphony the polished notes of those whose intellects have been expanded, and their tastes refined, and their souls elevated by the lofty contemplations of science. Jealous of scientific pursuits! Why, we know that science in all her laboratories is but fabricating for our Lord one of the most graceful and resplendent of all the many crowns which shall be on his head in the day of his completed glory. To this end—

> "Science is but his factor,
> To engross up glorious deeds on his behalf;
> And he will call her to so strict account,
> That she shall render every glory up;"—

And then herself, having paid her willing tribute, shall sit at his feet to hear his word, or wait as a humble handmaid to execute his behests, esteeming it as her highest honour that she is permitted to honour Him.

ON THE

PLACE AND ENDS OF MIRACLES.

BY

ROBERT RAINY, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY AND CHURCH HISTORY, NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

II.—On the Place and Ends of Miracles.

The subject which I have chosen does not impose on me the obligation to discuss from end to end the argument concerning miracles, and the difficulties which men have chosen to raise about them. I have only undertaken to illustrate how miracles fit into God's ways of dealing with our minds and hearts. And my object in undertaking this, is to do something to fortify the mind against a vague doubt, not unfrequently suggested now-a-days by those who do not choose to come forth with an explicit denial. I find, however, that it will be necessary for me to glance at the general argument, before I pass to my more especial theme; for it is desirable to indicate what place my subject holds in the general argument, and how it stands related to other considerations. This must be my apology for touching rapidly on various branches of the subject, which it is impossible to discuss fully, impossible almost even to represent fairly within the limits which I must observe.

Eighteen hundred years ago and more, a great teacher appeared in Judea. The people of the Jews among whom he appeared, was a people distinguished

by the remarkable character of its religious history. They were the only nation on the earth that held the faith and worship of one God, Infinite and Almighty, and that had joined with it a practical persuasion of His present and particular providence, and of near relations to men assumed and borne by Him. They believed that He had been dealing with them for many ages; and certainly along the line of their remarkable history there had arisen successively great teachers, claiming a divine mission, and uttering a series of splendid prophecies. Moreover, in their own opinion and belief, their religious history was still unfinished, the dealings of God with them were still in progress. The religion which they cherished, the worship that had been delivered to them, the prophetic messages which they had received, had this peculiarity, that they were all, and always, expectant. The people were thrown upon the future. God, who had been dealing with them, was yet further to unfold His character and will, in other greater interpositions. The splendid history of the past was only leading up, through the hopes and yearnings of the present, to a more consummate future. So they were led to join, with all their present service, a peculiar spirit of *waiting;* and that which they waited for, was to prove *the* consolation of Israel. Such was their hope.

That past history of theirs had been marked according to their historians, among other things, by miracles or mighty acts of the Lord. These were not confined to narrow periods of the history; rather, they were found more or less attaching to the whole. Yet two principal masses might be singled out, connected with two great eras. The one was the time of Moses and

Joshua, when the people received their institutions, and were led into their land. The other was that of Elijah and Elisha, when the authority of their institutions, and the majesty of their God, were vindicated and restored to honour. Those mighty acts were wrought in general in connection with the ministry, and at the hand of men; they marked those men as messengers from God, and they betokened the emphasis and peculiarity of divine care bestowed on the people in whose behalf they were wrought. On these great recollections the people reposed, waiting for the manifestations yet to come.

Among them, then, there appeared at length that great teacher, Jesus. He was mighty in word: He was also mighty in deed. Of Him it is recorded, that He wrought many miracles, mighty works and signs. All who followed Him testified that He did so. He Himself appealed to them in evidence of His authority as sent from God. Nor is there the slightest trace of the reality of those remarkable events having been denied by His contemporaries, who had access to information on the subject; nor yet that His works had at all a tentative character, sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing. Moreover, as He wrought many mighty works during His ministry, so it closed with the greatest miracle of all. For, having been rejected, and as rejected, put to death by His countrymen, He rose again the third day; and forty days afterwards He was seen ascending into the heavens, by His assembled disciples.

This coming of our Lord with signs and wonders throws a light back on the whole course of the previous history, with its signs; that was preparing His

way. And it throws a light forward also, inasmuch as it prepares and establishes our hearts in the expectation of one conclusive mighty work, which we still await,—even our Lord's return from the heavens, the resurrection and judgment of quick and dead at His appearing.

Concerning miracles, then, and concerning those ascribed to our Lord in particular, questions have often been raised, and objections proposed. The nature of the objection and the ground of it have never varied materially. It is always based on the unlikeness of miracles to what we see around us, on their startlingly exceptional character, as contrasted with the constancy of nature and her laws. In truth, it is simply the application to the miracles of Scripture of that familiar feeling, in virtue of which, any of you going out in the afternoon to take a walk, feels pretty sure that he is not likely to meet with any miracles before he comes home again. The substance of the objection, I repeat, has never varied; but the way of putting it has. At present we have it propounded and pressed, broadly and unequivocally, by one class of reasoners. But there are many persons who, either from a recollection of the vigour with which such objections have been met heretofore, or from an idea that an objection veiled often does more work than an objection displayed, seem more disposed to put it obliquely, so to say, than directly. They say that every day furnishes us with a more precise acquaintance with the facts and laws of nature. And this inevitable advance in our views of nature and the world, tends to render the very idea of a miracle more and more anomalous and incongruous. That

idea must more and more rank with the antiquated and exploded notions which were entertained once, but cannot be easily entertained any more. Therefore, it is suggested, it may be as well to inquire whether it is of any great importance that we should continue to give it a place in our minds; and whether Christianity in our days may not dispense with all concern about the matter, and all responsibility for it. Now, in point of fact, it is further said, one may be comforted to find that on a just view of things, this is precisely what results. Whatever miracles, or events so called, might do or mean for men of a past age, they are, for Christians now, entirely extraneous and superfluous. They are not useful, it is said, for the purpose of supporting our faith, for our faith may rest on the general excellence of Christianity, considered as involving a worthy tone of mind, and leading to nobility of conduct and life. Nay, instead of miracles grounding a faith in anything else, they require faith in order to believe in them, and that much more than the doctrines which they are said to support. And then, they are not now fitted either to be objects of contemplation or sources of instruction. We ought rather to refuse to let mere wonders like these occupy our minds. There might be a stage when people could usefully contemplate a truth in the garb of a wonder, but we now-a-days would do better to contemplate exclusively the moral or spiritual principle in itself, that alone can be considered to have within it a value, and permanent importance. So then we may peacefully lay miracles aside, we may be willing to let questions about them settle themselves as they can, secure that nothing

that bears on such a point can be for us, as Christians, modern Christians, a matter of any great importance.

This line is taken by a certain number of persons who profess and who believe themselves to be Christians, and who do not wish to be understood as attacking Christianity. Others again do not go so far as the views and statements I have adduced ; but they are more or less uncomfortable and perplexed, either because they believe there is some force in the difficulty, or because they are aware that others think so. Others of course who renounce Christianity, take advantage of these views to make a more unqualified or at least a more frank and open application of them. It is because such things are put abroad, that I have undertaken to say something upon the subject to-night.

And first, men delude themselves, who profess to retain Christianity, and yet to be indifferent about miracles, or ready to renounce belief in them, as if they were a kind of garnishing and nothing more. I shall not illustrate this position by dwelling on the necessity of miracles to certify us of the Divine character of the revelation that comes to us, although I believe that for this purpose miracles have a place which cannot be supplied in any other way. Nor shall I dwell on the kind of conception with respect to God and religion which miracles announce, and for which they prepare us ; though this also is relevant here. But I rely simply on the consideration, that the very central articles of Christianity cannot be confessed without confessing miracles. That Christ was supernaturally conceived and born, and

was on the earth Immanuel, God with us; that after three days he rose again; and that bye and bye He ascended up into heaven in the presence of His disciples; these are miracles the greatest and most stupendous. If these are denied our faith is vain. If they are admitted, then the question of miracles is settled, for what objection can be laid against the other miracles that would not first apply to these. To speak therefore of resigning the miraculous element, and retaining our religion notwithstanding, is either a delusion or a snare. If we are to assert Christianity we are to assert miracles. And if the advancing spirit of the age is to antiquate miracles, and make them practically incredible, then it is Christianity itself which this spirit of the age is moving out of the way.

But, secondly, let us see what it is that is relied upon as either formally and logically excluding miracles, or as practically putting them out of the question. It is the advance of science, as it is seen reducing all things to laws, and turning every phenomenon into a fresh illustration of the constancy of nature, which constancy knows no exception, and discloses no hint of any. That is the lever they work with. Now as to this, one thing is perfectly certain, viz., that no recent discoveries, no recent progress in the details of science, or in the correlation of its departments, can have even the least bearing on the question now before us. Whatever force may be in the argument against miracles from the constancy of nature, no recent discoveries have made that argument one whit better or worse; none has affected in any way the difficulties said to arise in that quarter.

A hundred years ago, the argument was precisely the same as it is to-day, and the answers to it were not founded on anything on which the progress of science can exert any influence. The constancy of nature, as alleged here, we may suppose, implies that the qualities of natural objects, or the forces which those qualities imply, always manifest themselves in the like circumstances, and so as to fulfil or exemplify the same laws of working. So we find it in our experience ; and so, we may presume, we are to find it. On the assumption of this general principle the investigations of scientific men proceed. Now this principle has been perfectly familiar for generations, and could not be enhanced in point of evidence or precision by any progress of science. It was perfectly well understood long ago, that this must be the assumption at the foundation of all progress in human knowledge. All that has recently been done simply affords fresh illustrations of it, illustrations which were confidently expected to arise in the same proportion as phenomena should be analysed and resolved. These illustrations have added neither range nor force to any principle that is available in this argument. It is vain to pretend to be, on this particular point, more advanced than our great-grandfathers.

The truth is, that the recent advances of science, and the increasing number of facts reduced to law, have had, in connection with our argument, just one legitimate effect, and no more. It has added nothing to the principle on which correct thinkers have been dealing with nature for generations, but it has modified legitimately and advantageously some popular impressions. There were impressions on the popular mind,

as though some departments of nature were to be regarded as in some degree the domain of chance; as though in these the chain of causes were more loosely knit, and as though an element of inherent uncertainty and precariousness, and therefore a region of caprice, might be here presumed. These were the departments of nature with respect to which *we* were uncertain (the phenomena being hard to analyse), and the tendency was to place the uncertainty in the *things*. This has not entered formally into the views of any correct thinker for a long time back, *e.g.*, so as to modify a formal argument; but an influence from it might, in a loose way, and inadvertently, adhere to the mind and occasionally manifest itself. Hence also a tendency to suppose those to be departments of nature in which especially place or room might be assumed to exist for a kind of interference not elsewhere manifest, and that in them the agency of various supernatural beings, good and evil, might be specially and frequently exerted. The progress of science has narrowed the domain regarding which it was possible to frame such fancies; and it has taught many how unreasonable it is to entertain such fancies regarding any department of nature—winds, earthquakes, or any other whatever. This influence, then, has been exerted by the progress of science, and it has been exerted legitimately; and now, does any one suppose that *this* influence is adverse to a belief in Scripture miracles? He who does so betrays only the most complete confusion of mind upon the subject of miracles, and the relations in which miracles must stand with the ordinary process of the world.

For now, to come to the point as regards this branch

of the subject, this constancy of nature, of which so much has been said,—which has been illustrated so copiously by all the investigations that have reduced phenomena to laws, and assigned manner and measure to the forces of the world—this constancy of nature, how does it really stand related to miracles? *It is the supposition and assumption on which miracles are based, and upon which the evidence for miracles rests. It is so far from having anything in it against miracles, that it is the foundation of the argument* for *miracles and* from *miracles.*

It needs no elaborate or metaphysical reasoning to make this out. The constancy of nature, as applicable to this argument, includes these positions. 1. That no event takes place without a cause, or set of conditions on which its occurrence depends. Secondly, that the objects around us in the world, with their properties, are to be regarded as constant causes, embodying forces that are constant in the manner and measure of their working, or conform accurately to law. The conditions being all present in the same way, and nothing present to modify their action, the event always will take place. These are precisely the fundamentals of the argument concerning miracles. Here is an event, it must have a cause. There must have been a power precedent, a source of power present to produce it. Secondly, it cannot be ascribed to any ordinary cause, any of those which exemplify their action in the experience of the world's processes. For these are constant in their working, they make no leaps, they do not vary from the track. The forces of nature have a range and a physiognomy

of their own; and so the miracle stands out, still claiming to have its cause found.

No doubt it may be said, how can you tell but that the extraordinary event which you call a miracle may be the effect of some purely natural cause, though it be a cause not yet discovered? If this is objected, it is enough to reply, *first*, that though it may sound well as generally stated, there are some events of which no one will venture to allege, that they could be produced by natural causes; and *secondly*, (as has been very well urged lately,) that the very progress of science since those days, with the discovery and analysis of natural forces which it implies, puts it more than ever out of the question that natural causes, undiscovered, still should have produced, eighteen hundred years ago, the remarkable events of which we speak.

Well, but remember that we are not speaking about an "event" merely. The events do not stand alone. They are connected with a man. The man performed them, and that simply by a word, indicating that the divine power was now to go forth to accomplish them. A word indicates that the finger of God is to be laid on the things of nature, and that you are to see events of an unprecedented pattern, springing amid its ordinary phenomena. Hence it has been said that it is not merely miracle, but prophecy terminating in miracle, that is here presented to us. Again the event is not solitary another way, for it is one of a number and a variety of such events, which are said to cluster round this man's history. Yet, again, this man and his works, arise in the line of a great providential movement which has been going on for ages, in the history of a people whose religious character and ex-

perience are most singular. Finally, the appearance of this man, by whom, and at whose word these wonders were wrought, has proved, beyond all question, to be the turning point of the history of the world. These are the miracles of which we speak, the miracles alleged by us. And they are related to the constancy of nature, simply in the manner which I described a little ago.

I know very well that those who wish to make a difficulty on this ground, try to stretch the principle of the constancy of nature, so as to make it cover a position which would sustain a more effectual argument. They say, "This is the constancy of nature as we find it verified, viz. that no event occurs, that cannot be referred to a *natural and constant* cause, to a law that is capable of being assigned and verified. We know that many marvels have occurred which seemed inexplicable for a time; of these, many have been explained; when explained, it has always been by assigning them to causes working according to constant and assignable laws. And we believe this to be the constancy of nature, viz., that no event ever occurs that may not be referred to natural and constant causes." But, to assume this ground, is to advance a whole bunch of fallacies. First, it assumed what is denied as to *universal* experience. Secondly, if it be taken of more recent experience, it comes to this, that for a long time, and during the whole formation of the rigorous experimental science, we have seen nothing but the agency of constant causes, and these conforming, of course, to their constant laws. This is as much as to say, that we have not seen, for a long time, God working any miracles. What does that prove? Not

even that He is not working them, though that may be probable enough on other grounds; but simply, that God is not wont to exhibit miracles, either to entertain or to perplex those who investigate the processes of nature. Does any body really suppose that the advocates of miracles are bound to assert that He will or that He ought? But I do not choose to dwell on these things. For, as it seems to me, the proper answer to the assumption, as thus stated, is simply this, that it contradicts the fundamental principles of the Inductive Philosophy. There is not a position more sacredly established in the modern philosophy than this, that no *a priori* principle, such as that assumed, can absolutely prejudge or exclude the proper evidence of a fact or phenomenon having taken place. It may be, and is true, that certain kinds of alleged facts may be highly improbable on various grounds. They may be so improbable as to justify a man in requiring very respectable evidence before attending to the allegation, and in sifting the evidence very well before he believes it. It would be interesting (if it were possible here, which it is not) to consider the just operation of this kind of improbability, and how far it does or does not attach to the miracles of Scripture. All I can say now is, that when you come to probabilities, you must take in all the kinds and all the sources of probability. But all this, whatever be in it, does not come in the way of the assertion I have made, viz., that no presumptions or assumptions such as that supposed, can absolutely exclude the proof of a fact. The fact, the phenomenon, duly witnessed, must be admitted, and then you immediately cast about for the cause or source of it. "Yes," some one

may reply, "we look for a cause reducible to a law, and we will admit the fact on the hypothesis that it may be so reducible." I reply, You fly in the face of the fundamental principles of inductive philosophy in prescribing any such conditions. The fact must come to its rights; it must do so, even if it be a fact that shall imply a wholly new kind of causes. Your business is to take facts and causes as they come; to trace and verify them, not to dictate to them.

No,—there is no argument of this kind that will stand, unless you can establish a positive impossibility, by positively excluding every ground for, or every source of miracles. And that can only be by Atheism, not assumed, or asserted, but *proved.*

For, only consider, that *we* modify the course of nature. We are doing it continually. God has been pleased to appoint or allow, that the course of nature may be controlled by the interposition of *will*, acting freely, though within limits, the whereabouts of which is easily ascertained. And, being conscious of this every day of our lives, is it anything but philosophy bewitched, fascinated by ghosts of its own raising, that can persuade men who admit a personal God, to allow themselves to be entangled in such a feeble web of sophistry as this is? What should hinder God from interposing in like manner; only with a power and mastery that mark the interposition as His?

But will He? Here we come on a new way of putting the objection, and one that falls in very much with the current tone on these matters. Men say, "We believe in God; but as we contemplate His works in their magnificent march from age to age, the conviction grows and deepens that this is God's man-

ner, to work by laws; and that He will have us to mark it as His manner, *His* way of working; and the march of science over all departments deepens this conviction on our minds; and it will deepen it on the minds of men at large, whatever you may choose to say to the contrary. God, as a matter of fact, accustoms us to this style and way of working—viz., by laws,—and the impression grows strong, that to suppose He ever works otherwise is a mistake, and rests on some mistake or other." This may be regarded as one of the best shapes which the argument can assume; and in this shape it falls in very much with that strain of remark which I indicated near the beginning of the lecture, as at present popular in certain quarters. "What we see makes us think it unlikely, that God will, or would work miracles." Now, it might be enough to say, that an objection like this would be all very well, if we had nothing to do but to discuss likelihoods; it would not be strong, but it might have a certain weight; but that it is merely presumptuous, when we are dealing with evidence that miracles have been wrought. Let it be proved if it can be proved, that God cannot work miracles; or, let it be proved if it can be proved, that God ought not to work miracles. But if neither of these things can be proved, then you never can plead your opinion of what God will do, to shut out evidence of what He *has* done. This might be enough, if a complete argument were the only thing in view. But we are here dealing with an *impression*, vague it may be, and unreasonably applied; but impressions are not the less influential in many cases, because they are vague, nor although they are unreasonable. And, therefore,

I have thought it fit to speak of the ends of miracles, that we may both perceive the groundless character of that impression, and may feel on the contrary how fitly miracles fall in with the design of the dispensations of God.

I say, then, that what God will do, or the style of operation which He will adopt, depends on the ends He has in view, and which, by his working, He designs to bring to pass. Now the experience of the world, as observed and analysed by scientific investigators, shews us God's way of working for the unfolding of the physical world, from age to age, and for enabling man to develope his ordinary history in the scene so constituted. God's way of working here, and for these ends, appears to be by upholding constant forces, which operate according to fixed laws. And this result of observation may be taken as yielding a presumption that in general that will be his manner in this sphere and for these ends. Yet it can never be more than a presumption ; and even as a presumption cannot be stretched very far. We do not know where or when reasons may exist which shall make it fit for God to interpose some altered mode of working, some form of energy that cannot be reduced to the formula I have referred to. Still we see how steadfastly, for ages, the order of the universe abides, all things being set in number, and measure, and weight. We see how fitted it this to promote the education of the race, and to give us the opportunity of penetrating one depth after another of creative wisdom, power, and glory. We see how impressively such a mode of working, by its very steadfastness, is fitted to train us in the knowledge of some Divine

attributes. We see how the conceptions which this order supplies, meeting us and shining out on us from every domain of science, furnish the mind of man for steady and growing mastery over nature. And so we may well gather that this is to be the ordinary character of our experience, as it regards God's ways of working in this sphere and for these ends.

But there are other ends which God may and does design, for the attainment of which miracles seem to be the appropriate and most admirable means: not miracles scattered without an apparent reason through the workings of nature, but occurring as marked exceptions to the general order, and in marked connection with the object for which they are designed. There may be many reasons in consideration of which God might work miracles which we do not know; his reasons are his own. But there are some which we do know, and which we ought to consider. And these reasons which we do know, these ends which we may assign are most weighty; and they are such that, if we are not to say they could not be attained without miracles—which is perhaps more than ought to be asserted by us—we may yet say that there is no other way by us conceivable in which they could have been attained.

For miracles accompany revelation. They present themselves as fit works of God when He reveals. This, I may say, furnishes us with the reason why we have seen no miracles for so many ages (the fact on which the doubt is based). If God has closed his revelation, it is no wonder that He has ceased for the present to add those signs. Objectors love to reason as though miracles, if possible at all, might be expected to turn

up occasionally in the midst of our experiments as pure anomalies, that come from nothing and go to nothing. We assert, and are bound to assert, no such thing. We believe in no miracles but such as are the birth of God's steadfast purposes, and are ordered to ends. And believing the ends of miracles to be connected with the process of revelation, the fact that they do not occur during this period in which revelation has bid us wait for our Lord's return, is precisely what we should be prepared to count upon.

I repeat, then, miracles present themselves as fit works of God Revealing. They come to us, then, as part of this general allegation, that God has been pleased to deal with the minds and wills of men by something additional to the works of nature, viz., by revelation. So that it is with reference to the end thus assigned, and with reference to that only, that the question ought to be raised. Is the natural order of things, with its constant course, the only revelation of himself which God has made to man? or is there a farther dealing with the minds and wills of men by revelation? For if so, then here, where God passes forth beyond nature to speak, it may be very fit that he should pass beyond nature to do.

Now through natural things God does deal with our minds. They supply to our minds a noble field of exercise ; they disclose to us depths and reaches of beauty and order that are inexhaustible, for still the boundaries retreat as we pass onward over the field. Nor is it only with the creatures that our minds become conversant in this discourse. That which may be known of God also, is here. His being and perfections are in these things displayed to

us. And there is that within us which teaches us to refer those works to a personal and righteous God, and suggests to us the concreated law under which He has placed us, and which we cannot doubt to be the expression to us of His eternal will. He does reach our minds through the things that are made ; and the minds which he reaches are so constituted, that being put in play they do or may gather true thoughts of God, they may discern something of His nature and something of His will. But then this is not enough, for man. We have the best reason for believing it was not enough, even in the unfallen state ; certainly it is not enough now that man is fallen.

God speaks to us by His works ; yet there remains a distance ; yes, and there is a silence too. The voice *is* gone through all the earth, the words to the ends of the world ; yet there is no speech, there is no language, their voice is not heard. For this great nature stands and utters herself from age to age in her play of laws, unbending, equal to herself ; so that the more she is searched, though the chorus deepens, widens, swells immeasurably, yet the sum of meaning is found only the more certainly to be the same, one unvarying sameness from age to age—one tranquil and majestic testimony to every man and every race —uttered still as fully and persistently if there is no man to hear, no mind to be filled by it. Here indeed God is revealed, yet so that he remains veiled. There is not enough here for man. Bearing God's own image he needs more. He was made for fellowship, for intercourse, for friendship, not only with his fellows, but with his Maker. And that implies the disclo-

sure of personal meanings, mind apprehended bending to my mind, and heart moving to meet my heart. Moreover, that element in man, in virtue of which he can choose and take his course as a moral being finds no sympathy, in the steadfast and equal sequences of nature. Man feels, indeed, that God must be one who has a moral character. But he finds no adequate *utterance* addressed to this capital capacity.

Even conscience, the monitor within, which, as life unfolds, suggests to us what the character of the great Creator is, does not speak the adequate utterance of man's Maker to such a being as man; rather it moves man to a listening earnestness, to say, Speak, be not silent unto me. If there be no answer but that which nature gives, then God remains veiled and distant. For, let it be remembered, it is the nature of man, and the very meaning of his place in this scene of things, that he should be dealt *with from without.* The conscience and capacities within fit him to hearken to voices from without. And if the constitution and course of nature be the only divine utterance, so addressed, to him, then as to the highest wants and capabilities of man, God remains veiled. Wise, indeed, He is, and benevolent, in general arrangements, but remote and immoveable—disclosing only purposes and meanings that are equal to themselves from age to age. He never, nowhere, comes down to walk, step for step, beside my path, and to make me feel that as my life of changes passes on, He has a purpose and a meaning for every change, and an individual purpose and meaning for the result to which every change shall bring me.

That God, therefore, should reveal himself, in some way that is additional to the revelation in nature, should deal with our minds and wills in a way more personal and special, is surely an *admissible* idea. It is so in any view; but it is more evidently so when we view man fallen. If God has any purpose of mercy towards man fallen, it must be revealed to him and made good to him in a way proportioned to his actual state. But man's actual state is that of having fallen out of harmony with himself, and with God's works around him. He is plainly prone to miss and lose even those teachings which nature might afford to a purer mind. And he plainly needs information and direction which a purer mind would not need to seek from nature, or from any other quarter.

The sum is, that on all accounts we may judge it fit, that to His creature man God shall have *meanings* to declare, meanings which nature does not disclose, of which her whole course seems calmly ignorant, meanings which she was not fitted to embody or attain.

Now the method which God will take, in this special dealing with the minds of men, may be easily assigned. For we see how He has done it; and we may at all events maintain to our opponents that so He *might* do it. There is nothing unworthy or unlikely about it. God can convey his meaning by a direct and most inward impression on His creature's mind, accompanying it with an assuring evidence as to the source from which, and the authority with which it comes. He *might* do that in the case of every man. But as I have already said, so I now repeat, it is the nature of man, and the explanation of his whole place and constitution—that he was meant

to be dealt with *from without.* He is dealt with through persons and through *things without him,* in all of which he finds the materials of his history, and the objects upon which his capacities are exercised: God, therefore, has chosen to deal with man, by making his inward impression on his servants' mind to be a message and a meaning concerning things and events transacted in the world. To these things and events the meaning, the Divine meaning is attached, or, in these it is embodied and realised. And this being declared by God's servant, God is seen and found entering into a special course of dealings with men, setting them forth into a history of transactions with God, at every turn of which they may be conscious of his nearness, of His special mind toward them, of that regard and bent of His thoughts, His judgments, and His mercies, which mere nature never could disclose. So he did before man fell. So He has done ever since. And thus man's nearest and most momentous relations to his God, in those matters in which man is above nature—in which man is not measured by mere mechanical forces —*those* relations are ascertained, unfolded, exercised, so as to produce the effects that are embraced in God's design. This is the kind of professed revelation to which the alleged miracles are attached. No one can show that such a revelation is unsuitable to man or unworthy of God. Now, I say that such a revelation, unfolding meanings of God which nature cannot disclose, of which, from age to age, she takes no note, and makes no sign, might most fitly be accompanied by works of God, that are no part of the order of nature, are no birth of the forces that are governed by her laws. Are not such works a fit token, that

those divine meanings, which man is now to apprehend, and deal with, and keep in view as he looks out on the scenery of his life, are sure objective realities? Do they not fitly assure him that though nature does not echo them to his inner man, as she does some other truths, yet he need not doubt nor fear, as though this persistent silence of nature were a silence of God? Do they not *fitly* assure him, that this *added meaning* with which he is called to deal, is no fancy of some erring brother, but is indeed the unfolded mind of God?

So then, in general, the miracles come to serve for attestation of the authority of the messenger; they are the work of divine power, here and now accompanying the man and going forth at his word. He that is able to announce a present work of God, of the nature of immediate interposition, apart from the ordinary forces of nature, may well be thought commissioned to declare God's mind on those other matters, in respect to which he announces a message from on high. This, in general, is the leading function of miracles. But there are several additional considerations which are fitted to show you how fitly miracles occupy this place, and in how many ways they are adapted to produce on the human mind the precise effects intended.

For, first, they are striking in their own nature; they attract and secure attention, by their very unlikeness to the ordinary course of things. They call into the liveliest exercise that sense of awe to which immense and strange power wielded by the will of one unseen, disturbing the ordinary course of affairs, always gives birth in human minds. This effect, indeed, is produced primarily in the witnesses and the contempo-

raries ; but it is not confined to them. For every one who receives the message down to the latest generations, may receive it as a message *so* from God, that when it came God laid claim to human attention and human submission by these emphatic and exceptional signs. To us, who are hardened and confused by sin, this admonitory emphasis of communication serves a most important purpose. For who does not feel that, as a race, we are in a condition of bondage to the creature, "serving the creature more than the creator?" This is our sin, that we have regard to the creatures, the order of things around us, as a seat of power, and a source of good, independent of God, and considered apart from Him. On the other hand, that Divine being, whom we do not altogether deny, we are skilful to place far away ; and we think of His will, so far as it is His, as no such august matter, just because all things continue as they were. On these accounts the appeal to our attention is made in a way precisely adapted to the evils of our state, when, along with the message (which, even if we believed it, we might be disposed to treat so idly) we have presented the idea of God's power in movement—in movement along a line of sudden energy that is strange to nature. This presents to us a person who sets forth his will in deeds. It suggests to us how much we need to have our relations to that Power, and the results it brings about, and to the principles which it is pledged to enforce, adjusted, and set right.

But, again, in another respect, the miracle is precisely adapted to be the proper and convincing pledge of the truth of revelation. For observe what it is

that revelation is concerned to set forth. It sets forth or reveals God; yet not merely nor mainly God in the internal glory of His immanent perfections; but rather God contemplated in that *which He is doing and will do.* The communion or fellowship of God with man always proceeds by a manifestation of that which God will do. Special dealings and ways of procedure on God's part, on which nature is silent, are announced; things which God pledges himself to effect are declared. And man is to order and conform his ways answerably to those pledged proceedings of God. For man, as a historical being, is not called to stand with God, but to walk with Him.

What the Revelation therefore declares to man is this, how the power of God will go forth in action, in justice, faithfulness and love; and this egress of God's power man is thenceforth to expect, and in the expectation of it dealing with God as pledged to it, he is to go. This I repeat is the general character of Divine Revelations. Now on account of this general character which attaches to them, the fit evidences are miracles and prophecy. Of prophecy which is itself a miracle, I will not speak now. But the miracle is an exhibition here and now of Divine action going forth in a manner and along a line strange to the action of constant causes and ordinary laws, singling out an effect which is not contained in the order of nature, and bringing it to pass. So it stands for a token that the agency of God shall not fail to be there and to do its work, when the times of the promise come round; it stands for a token that the likelihood based on the appearances of things, on that certain order which seems to look so

impassive on all our hopes and fears, is not to measure or bound our faith. It justifies us in resolving that our faith shall measure its confidence only by the word, from which shall not be parted the power, of the infinite One.

Still more impressively, however, do such considerations present and press themselves when we come nearer to the practical exigences of man, and consider what God undertakes and calls us to expect in a revelation of mercy. The revelation comes to sinners, and it sets forth a scheme of restitution. It finds us not only darkened and perplexed, which we have stated already, but undone.

It finds us fallen, and so fallen, that neither nature nor conscience, in virtue of any power in either or both of them, shall enable us to emerge again on the platform of a state of solid well-being. The object therefore of the divine word and deed is not merely to unfold the possibilities and impossibilities of our actual state, but to make a new beginning of our highest life, from which beginning there shall go forward a career of deliverance and glory. This indeed may be denied; men may assert that the fall was not so deep, and that the remedial dispensation does not import anything so extraordinary. But it is enough for my argument, that the case may be in this respect as I have stated it. This may be the actual fact and the Scripture doctrine:—the fall *may* be so deep, the remedy so wonderful and decisive. When we are maintaining the fitness of the miracle to be appended to the doctrine, we must be allowed to bring forward our own persuasion of what the doctrine is, and to allege the congruities discernible

from our own point of view. At all events, whether granted or not, it must be asserted and maintained against all who deny it or explain it away, that the case is even so, that the fall is so ruinous, that the redemption must be so decisive. But if the case be so, or be anything like this, then manifestly the question which is raised, and may be addressed to every teacher inspired or not, about every doctrine revealed or imagined, is not a question of truth merely, but a question of *power*. Let true things be said bearing on the case, and on the relations both of God and man to it—true things, never so true and never so clearly truths, which God only could reveal, that is not enough ; the question is whether they are truths that set forth an assurance of power, actually coming forth to do the work required ; and whether they are accompanied with tokens and pledges that may certify and sustain the faith of so great a thing as the actual egress and exercise of this power. Is this truth wedded to a power and declarative of a power fit to deal with such a case as ours ? Is it allied to power, in whose going forth a Divine hand shall be laid on the ruin of the fall, a new life breathed, a new beginning made ; power that shall clear away the difficulties that obstruct our return, and open a pathway for us, and bring us thereby back to God? Are we left to the order of nature, and to the resources that are contained in and measured by her laws ? are we left to those forces, doomed to labour in contrivances that still break down, seeking to make nature serve a purpose for us, for which her powers were never destined ? or ceasing from the toil, are we left to stand in the world, amid its many ordered har

monies, and feel how sadly they look on the creature that has fallen and gone astray? Is that our case? Or is there power, and does there come to us the assurance of a power, which has entered into history, and can enter into our hearts, a power *above* any or all the powers that are contained in the order of nature, *above* them all; power which however gently it entered into history, however secretly it may work within the heart, is a power of that order which wrought in the beginning, and made the beginnings, a power that can lay—has laid—a new foundation, and can wake the pulses of a new heart? That is the question of *Redemption*, a question not of truth only, but of power. God means us to feel it to be *the* question. When we say so, we neither deny nor disgrace the natural order, which is good, and worthy to abide steadfast for its ends. Nor do we forget that that redeeming power has also its order, doubtless a glorious order, which we partly apprehend. Nor do we forget that usually that redeeming virtue is so coordinated to the natural order, or takes up that into its working, as to make no jar. But yet, in the end, that question still returns. Is there such a power pledged and working—power measureless? Are we assured that it comes, able to exceed and bear rule over all the forces of the natural order? Are we assured that there is no fate in that order that can stay its blessed course? Is there a power that can bid any waves be still, make any diseases whole, awaken out of the most real death? We need a revelation that shall deal with us so as to make this manifest and plain to us, a revelation that shall mark it as a most experimental matter of fact. For this is the con-

dition, and the only ground of true faith in *redemption;* not otherwise shall there be born and reared, a faith that, in the presence of the evils of our state, shall expect and embrace redemption. There are times, decisive times in the lives of men, when this order of nature that girds us about, with its sure recurrences, its unhalting processes, its onward march, in which it seems to say, "The sum of power is mine, and I am the highest law," presses upon men very sore. There are times when, doubting if there be anything beyond this that they can practically deal with; men begin to realise what the order of nature means for a transgressor, for this is the order of nature, that the past determines and shapes the future. And the question rises,—He that came, asking for our faith, did He come like so many others, bringing words only, very good words, but oh how feeble, or did He come with word and deed, words wedded to power, as one able to reverse the past, and make all new? Surely miracles were one direct, fit, most reasonable way to make this clear. Marvellously it sustains and leads on the mind, when we are passing in to deal with Christ about the inward mysteries of the heart of man, and the life of God, that we see those mighty works of His; that we see how the magnificent and ancient order, which claims silently to sum in itself all the possible, retreated before His word to make way for new possibilities, for divine effects; so that what was most wayward, and what was most stable in nature, put a new demeanour on when He came near —and waves and storms were quieted—and death awoke to life.

This might lead us, if time served, to notice how

the miracles in the nature or character of them were adapted to express the manner in which the divine power that is above nature would exert itself to carry forward the divine counsel. It might be interesting to remark how the miracles varied with the stages of the dispensation,—in the time of Moses, expressing to that nation of slaves, called out to the privileges of God's first-born, how God set them free, fought along with them and for them, provided for them, carried them to their inheritance ; in the days of Elijah and Elisha, when the question was raised whether Jehovah were indeed the supreme and the Lord of the world, or whether another ought not to be preferred before Him, miracles that taught how the elements became servants of Jehovah's servants, to sustain them, to overthrow the rebellious, to reinstate the law of Moses, the servant of God ; in our Lord's day, setting forth the character of Him who was, and is, God's abiding ordinance for good, God's fountain of living water set forth for us to drink it, the eternal life manifest in the flesh, and given to the need and the sorrow of men.

But I cannot dwell on this, neither can I now go on to indicate other views that illustrate the reasons and ends of miracles, how fit it was that they should have a place, and a large place in the divine economy of revelation. What has been said may go some way to illustrate how congruous they are to the work of God as revealing; so that if you once admit that God might conceivably design to reveal to His creatures truths such as Scripture embodies, you cannot but admit that miracles form the most appropriate, expedient, and, as far as we can judge, necessary accompaniment, both with a view to declare the mission of

the messengers, and also to elevate the impressions of men, and direct their perception of what they deal with, and whom they deal with, and how they are to bear themselves in their dealings when they hearken to the word of God.

In conclusion, I shall express my persuasion that a due impression and belief of miracles (not alone our Lord's, but the others in the Scriptures in their connection with his) belong to those exercises of faith which at the present day exercise a most important influence on our general persuasion of the truth of Christianity, and more particularly on our religious training and our spiritual wellbeing. I do not wish to be understood as offering to pass judgment on individuals, who, under various influences, may have been led to take some erroneous ground on this matter, but I am thoroughly persuaded that, speaking generally, the real ground and bottom of difficulties about miracles is to be found here, viz., that men are not really persuaded of the fundamental truth that God is. And I believe, on the other hand, that a due impression of the mighty acts of Christ and of his servants under the old dispensation and the new, is very important for vivifying and brightening that belief, and counteracting some of the temptations of the present time. In former days, when the course of revelation was not yet completed, when, therefore, miracles still recurred from time to time, there was a trial of faith and an exercise for it. For so it was in those days that men were not so much disposed to deny the possibility of something more or less miraculous; but they were ready many of them to think that such works might come from an evil source. And so the connec-

tion of the miracle with the whole course of God's dispensations, and with the character and teaching of him who was commissioned to perform it, came in to steady the mind and to fix the confidence of those who believed in God. Now the current runs the other way. Men, familiarised with the great discoveries which have expounded so much of the ways of nature's working, and shewn us steadfast principles always exemplified as regulating the forces of the world, are tempted to make nature a prison both for God and man. They are tempted to believe in a God, measured in his working by that which nature shews, and to cut down religion to the proportions of such a God. Very much now the question of the faith is involved in our admiring and adoring God, doubtless as He exhibits himself in his works in the order of nature, and yet so that we refuse to stay there, and pass forward to adore Him as the "God that is ABOVE." Now miracles, as connected with the especial declaration of himself by God to man's spirit and man's need, with the drawing near of God to institute a fellowship of salvation, come into connection with this faith. A due impression about them is at once an instance of that faith, and it exerts an influence to define and fix it When men who do not profess to deny miracles undervalue them, either as evidence of our religion, or as a constitutive element of it, they exhibit a very shallow spiritualism, and indicate at least a defective exercise of mind about the being and ways of God. And the exercise of our mind in this department should gather itself to an especial energy as it rises to contemplate the central miracle and the source of miracles in the blessed and adorable person of the

Lord Jesus. In the midst of all the voices, loud and low, that nature utters with her multitudinous tongues (which all do speak *something* of God), let us catch the accents of another voice, clearer, deeper, charged with quite another meaning—a voice coming from heaven, opened across that tide of lower sounds—a voice that says, "This is my beloved Son; hear Him."

SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY

IN RELATION TO

SECULAR PROGRESS.

BY

WILLIAM G. BLAIKIE, D.D., F.R.S.E.

"All things are yours; whether things present or things to come."—1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

Spiritual Christianity in Relation to Secular Progress.

Among the many charges that are brought in these days against spiritual Christianity, one is, that it hinders secular progress, that it weakens all attempts to promote the temporal welfare of mankind. By spiritual Christianity is meant that which rests on such doctrines as these;—that the salvation of the soul through faith in Christ, and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, is the one thing needful; that it profits a man nothing if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; that this world is but a temporary and fleeting scene, the mere portal of the eternity which is beyond; and that our great object here should be to get our spirits trained and ripened for the life to come. The spirit of these doctrines, it has been alleged, is in many ways adverse to social improvement and secular progress. They teach us (according to the secularist) to look with resignation and indifference on the evils that prevail in the world, instead of trying to remedy them; they tend to make us careless of wrong now, because we say all will be put right hereafter; they lead us to stifle some of our truest instincts, such as desire of property, love of nature, love of home, love of innocent joys and recrea-

tions ; they make us aim at an impossible life, at living in the future and the unseen while we are intended to live mainly in the present and the visible; they engage us to a warfare in which we cannot conquer, spur us to a race in which we cannot win ; and thus, through the constant mortification of defeat, make us cross, and sour, and miserable, oftentimes less genial and less gladsome than many who are living without God, and without hope in the world.

Thus Mr W. R. Greg, one of the class of serious sceptics so characteristic of the present day, has said, "It is only those who feel a deep interest in, and affection for this world who will work resolutely for its amelioration ; those whose affections are transferred to heaven acquiesce easily in the miseries of earth, give them up as hopeless, as befitting, as ordained, and console themselves with the idea of the amends which are one day to be theirs. If we had looked upon this earth as our only scene, it is doubtful if we should so long have tolerated its more monstrous anomalies and more cureable evils. But it is easier to look to a future paradise than to strive to make one on earth ; and the depreciating and hollow language of preachers has played into the hands both of the insincerity and the indolence of mankind." To these general remarks this writer subjoins a note furnished him by a friend, to the effect, that when he counted up among his personal friends all whom he thought to be most decidedly given to spiritual contemplation, and to make religion rule in their hearts, at least three out of four appeared to have been apathetic towards all improvement of this world's systems, and a majority had been virtual conservatives of evil, and hostile to political and

social reform, as diverting men's energies from eternity.*

Much to the same effect is a remark by Mr Ruskin, in the 5th vol. of his "Modern Painters:" "The right faith in man is not intended to give him repose, but to enable him to do his work. It is not intended that he should look away from the place he lives in now, and cheer himself with thoughts of the place he is to live in next, but that he should look stoutly into this world, in faith that if he does his work thoroughly here, some good to others or himself, with which, however, he is not at present concerned, will come of it hereafter. And this kind of brave, but not very hopeful or cheerful kind of faith, I perceive to be always rewarded by clear practical success and splendid intellectual power; while the faith which dwells in the future fades away into rosy mist and emptiness of musical air. That result, indeed, always follows naturally enough on its habit of assuming that things must be right, or must come right, when probably the fact is, that so far as we are concerned, they are entirely wrong and going wrong, and also on its false and weak way of looking on what these religious persons call 'the bright side of things,' that is to say, on one side of them only, when God has given them two sides, and intended us to see both."

Besides standing in the way of the temporal good of society, spiritual Christianity is conceived by its opponents to be a great promoter of insincerity and hypocrisy on the part of those who affect it. They are regarded as ever professing to view this world and

* The Creed of Christendom, p. 251.

all its interests in a light which is not real and true. One of the writers whom I have quoted (Mr Greg) draws a picture of a preacher urging his congregation "to despise this world and all that belongs to it; to detach their hearts from this earthly life as inane, fleeting, and unworthy, and fix them on heaven, as the only sphere deserving the love of the loving, or the meditation of the wise;" then, an hour afterwards, snugly seated with his hearer at a well-spread table, enjoying all the comforts of life, fondling his children, discussing public arrangements or private plans in life with passionate interest; and yet both preacher and hearer looking at each other without a smile or a blush for the hollow and unworthy profession they are regarded as just having been making in church. In general, too, wholesale charges of hypocrisy against persons professing great spirituality are based upon an alleged difference between the way in which they practically treat this world, and the principles they profess to hold regarding it. It is insinuated, or boldly affirmed, that your very spiritual men know very well in most cases how to look after their own interests, and that the great contempt of the world which they affect is often not apparent when they are concluding a bargain or maintaining a right. But, then, there is a natural unwillingness on their part to believe that what they do and what they feel is fundamentally at variance with that superiority to the world which they profess to have attained; and hence (it is affirmed) a temptation arises to a course of sophistry that goes to vitiate conscience, and to make the light which is in them darkness. They are unwilling to let themselves believe that they really have a love for

the good things of this world; they will not let themselves fancy that they have any enjoyment in money or the other good things of life, or in a tale of fiction, or in an athletic exercise, or in a secular amusement. They are tempted to forced and unnatural methods of explaining their sensations in connection with such things; an atmosphere of self-deception is created around them; their consciences become morbid and unreliable; and, in many cases, the way is prepared for terrible departures from duty, for those flagrant outbreaks of corruption which give a triumph to the ungodly, and fill the hearts of Christians with horror and shame. Of course, I am not endorsing these charges against spiritual Christianity. I merely report them as the assertions of secularists; while, at the same time, it is impossible to deny that there are some professors of spiritual religion whose conduct does give a colouring of truth to the exaggerated picture.

In the case of some honest, humble, holy men, who day by day are endeavouring to live according to their conception of the spiritual life, there is often an uncomfortable uncertainty whether or not they are right in the attention they bestow on the things of this world, and the pleasure they derive from them. There is a lingering notion that there is something essentially carnal and wrong in all those tastes and tendencies which are not directly of a religious nature. To crucify all these tastes and tendencies they have never made up their minds to attempt; but not being very sure about them, it is in a somewhat furtive and underhand way they gratify them, as if they were afraid to attract the observation of persons more spiritually-minded, and were conscious of an inferiority which

they cannot defend. A life spent in this atmosphere of uncertainty can neither be a very comfortable nor very influential one. The tread of such persons cannot be the firm and manly advance of those who walk in the day, but rather the timid and hesitating motion of "him who walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth."

All these considerations make it exceedingly desirable that we should endeavour to get our conceptions cleared as to what the Word of God really teaches on the relation of Christians to this world, and the bearing of spiritual Christianity on social improvement and secular progress generally. The subject is one of great practical importance, and it demands not a little delicate discrimination and careful handling. Our course lies between a Scylla and a Charybdis—between a morbid spiritualism on the one hand, and a vulgar secularism on the other; and I must frankly throw myself on the indulgence of my audience; for besides the difficulties I have already mentioned, there is great difficulty, within the limits of a single lecture, in making one's meaning clear, and preventing misconceptions on the many points that must be raised. The subject is a two-sided one, and it is but one of its sides that I have directly to deal with. I hope it will not be inferred that I am indifferent to the other, or that, in shewing how godliness really has the promise of the life that now is, I forget that its great inheritance is in that which is to come.

What, then, is the doctrine of the Bible as to the relation to this world in which Christians should stand, more especially—I. As to the sense in which the world is to be renounced and overcome; and II. As

to the sense in which it is to be possessed and enjoyed?

1. My first remark in reply to the former of these questions is, that in reproving the love of the world, and calling on Christians to renounce it, the Bible does so *on great moral grounds*—not because the world is in itself a bad thing, or essentially unworthy of our regard, but because devotion to the world, *as it usually exists*, tends to the destruction of our higher nature, and hinders the application of the great Divine remedy for our sin. What the Bible aims its thrust at is *idolatry* of the world, and especially of its more material interests; putting these in the place of God; treating them as the chief good and the main chance for man; using them as the prodigal son used his share of his father's goods,—not with his father, nor under his wholesome supervision, but away by himself in a far-off country; making them thus the occasion of an actual separation from the personal God, and from all those holy and blessed influences that come from Him. The uniform teaching of the Bible is, that when the world is thus treated, the nature of man is not only dwarfed and starved, but corrupted, and finally ruined. Its baser tendencies are violently stimulated; a grovelling and selfish character is formed; all reverence for what is high, and pure, and holy evaporates; the blessed habit of correcting and elevating our ideas and impressions of things, by placing ourselves beside God, and looking on them from his lofty stand-point, has no existence; that sense of the dignity and grandeur of our being which is derived from the habitual contemplation of Eternity is

lost; that awful impression of our responsibility, and of the meaning and bearing of our life here which comes from viewing them in their relations to an endless existence, in which both we and all around us are to bear a part, never comes into play; the soul becomes numb and torpid, it degenerates into a kind of higher animal instinct, into a faculty that guides merely to present enjoyment. And with all this, there grows up a sad aversion to a spiritual Saviour and salvation, an unwillingness to be disturbed in present pleasures and pursuits, a disbelief in the reality of any future state, a dread of God, a feeling that his presence must be hateful, an inability to conceive of a higher life, a horror at the thought of being born again. And as it is impossible for any one to degenerate Godwards, without also falling off manwards, the human sympathies, under this process, contract and shrivel; and selfishness, in many of its most odious forms, becomes the ruling power within. It would not be difficult to shew that this is what the Word of God regards as the bad and dangerous elements of the love of the world. It is in this sense mainly that we are called to renounce and to overcome it. As God's rival in its claim to our hearts, and in its offer of reward, we dare not listen to it; and when the tempter spreads before us the glittering prize, as he did to Jesus in the wilderness, we are to repel him in the stern words of our Master, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

2. Hence, secondly, I remark that the great *antithesis* to the world in the Bible, the great object for whom the Bible claims the world's place in our

hearts, is God. It does not simply substitute a *better* world for a *bad* one, as secularists allege; it does not bid us expel this world from our hearts, and admit a better; it bids us give GOD his due place in them—that place which the world has usurped. Hence the grand object of the redemption accomplished by the death of Christ is given in these words—"Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us unto God*"—not merely that He might free us from deserved punishment, or even that He might restore us to our forfeited inheritance, but, including these, yet going far beyond them, "that he might bring us unto God." The great end of redemption is to place man in a right relation to God, and thus to bring to bear on Him all those purifying, elevating, transforming influences that come directly from his Father. Thus it was that when the prodigal son came to himself, he saw as clear as mid-day that the one course for him to take was to rise and go unto his father. It was not more money he wanted then. It was not another and better inheritance somewhere else that would have satisfied him; this might have been his feeling at one time, but not "*when he came to himself.*" And so, in the Bible, it is coming back to our Father, coming into a blessed relation to God, God in Christ, that is presented to us as the better part, the pearl of great price, the great end of redemption, the great substitute for the world as the true portion of our hearts. When we come into that blessed relation, not in theory only, but in practice, we come under the influence of all healing, purifying, elevating agencies. Whatever in us the world has corrupted, the influence of God's fellowship renews. We

come under a glorious fatherly training, of which we know the issue is to be the complete restoration of the character, and the complete restitution of the privileges of God's children. Even as this process goes on, some of these privileges are enjoyed. Among other things, we are invited to have filial fellowship with God in the contemplation of his works in the world around us, and in the enjoyment of some of the good things of this life. In our present state, however, this privilege is guarded and limited, *because we are so prone to forget that filial spirit in which these gifts should be received.* We are so prone to forget that it is as God's children we should go about the study of his works and the enjoyment of his gifts. But then we are always getting glimpses of another state, where this proneness to forget our Father shall no longer exist, and these restrictions shall no longer be required. We are stimulated to patience and cheerfulness under the ills of this life by the hope of that better portion. But it is not merely *as a better inheritance* that it is made to animate us. It is not merely that the *place* is to be better, but that *we* are to be better—in better company—under better influences—in our Father's house—under our Father's care. It is as the portion which we are to enjoy *with our Father,* and *with Jesus Christ,* our elder brother, in whose image we are to be confirmed and established for ever. I appeal to any intelligent reader of the Bible whether, in all its pictures of heaven, this thought is not uppermost. "I saw no temple there, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we

know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Hence it is not a picture but a caricature of the Scripture doctrine of the better life, when it is represented as teaching us to sacrifice everything that is good and pleasant here, in order that we may enjoy a larger share of the same kind of things hereafter. We are not encouraged to renounce this world and seek after heaven, simply because the one is a bad investment, and the other a good. We are not called to be patient and content under loss and suffering here, on the mere ground that, like money sunk in a deferred annuity, what we put past us at present will bring a great increase hereafter. We are not required to neglect the interests of time, because it will be more profitable to attend to the interests of eternity. In fact, neither the *interests* of the soul, nor the *interests* of eternity is a Scriptural phrase, and the mercantile aspect of both should banish them from use. I grant that the Bible does not exclude the consideration—that in the future life God's children shall have a far better portion than any that this world can bestow. I grant that it does present this as one ground of consolation for loss and suffering here. But I maintain that it is a subordinate consideration; it is by no means the leading view of the bearing of this life on that which is to come. The course which is set before Christians in this life, has ever for its chief recommendation, that in following it they are brought nearer to God, more under the direct influence of His grace and truth; that thus their own character is elevated, and their influence upon others for good is increased; that more of the filial spirit is

gendered in them, and a greater capacity for enjoying the fellowship of the Father; and that all this will be for their good in the world to come, inasmuch as by the gracious provision of God, the place of his children in heaven will be according to their attainments and services on earth.

But perhaps it will be said, that when we study the New Testament, we find a strain of remark and exhortation that seems to imply that it is a mark of a true Christian to live far above all the comforts and enjoyments of this world, and that instead of these, he must lay his account with a continual experience of griefs and pains; a wilderness life, a life in an enemy's country, a career of harassment and vexation, never to be terminated till he crosses the Jordan, and gets to his Father's house. Did not Christ say to his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me?" Did he not speak of a broad road that goeth to destruction, and a narrow way that leadeth unto life? Are we not told to go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach? Is it not said that they that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, and that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God? Did not Christ dissuade his followers from laying up for themselves treasures on earth? Did not St. Paul call on Timothy to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ? Did he not tell him that the love of money was the root, or at least a root of all evil? And do not all such texts and expressions teach us that the lot of the faithful Christian must always be a self-denying one; that he ought not to desire nor attempt to make

this life comfortable, but accepting it as necessarily hard and full of pain, expect neither rest nor happiness till he reach the promised land.

To attempt an exhaustive examination of this class of texts would be utterly out of place on the present occasion; for such a task would require a treatise rather than the corner of a lecture.* If we were to do so, we should probably find that the style of language adverted to finds its justification (1.) in that *unceasing effort to subject his own will to the will of God* to which every child of God is called, but which does not *necessarily* imply physical discomfort, or barrenness of worldly good. If there were nothing else to give pain to the Christian but that bitter and endless warfare with sin dwelling in him, which is so pathetically described in the seventh chapter of Romans, there would be enough to account for a considerable portion of the expressions quoted. (2.) The effort required to resist our strong and inveterate *tendency to sin in our handling of worldly things*, accounts for much of the strong language of Christ and His apostles. In handling money, for example, what constant care and self-denial are needed, to keep off the taint of greed, injustice, dishonesty, pride, dependence on the creature, self-indulgence, not doing to others as we would that they should to us! What extraordinary care and self-discipline are ever needed to discharge that

* The reader may find the subject handled with great judgment and discrimination in a little treatise by my venerable friend, Mr John Shepperd of Frome, entitled "Thoughts at Seventy-nine," in the chapters on "New Testament Precepts." It will not be supposed that the admirable author of "Thoughts on Devotion" approaches the subject under the influence of a secular bias.

one department of stewardship! Our hearts are ever ready to substitute an outward penance for an inward discipline, and to resort to outward renunciations of worldly good, when the more essential thing is an inward separation from all taint of sinful lust. Nothing could be farther from my desire than to obliterate the distinction between the broad road and the narrow, or to make out that it is much easier to be a Christian than many suppose; but it is very necessary to remind you that what, in all ages and in all circumstances, must chiefly make the Christian path a narrow one, is the necessity of a constant watch and struggle against sin in its more subtle as well as its grosser forms,—in the forms that are overlooked and tolerated in Christian society, as well as in those that are stigmatised and denounced. (3.) Still further, the language of Christ and His apostles is accounted for by the peculiar necessity of the times. It was necessary to prepare the church for the terrible era of persecution—the three centuries of fiery trial through which it had to pass. There are circumstances in which it becomes the duty of Christians to abandon every possession and pleasure, however lawful in itself, out of loyalty to Christ. Though not the normal state of things, it is far from uncommon, and the spirit must be cultivated that will not shrink from the sacrifice. In times of trial, it is peculiarly necessary to call up this spirit, and train Christians to a more than ordinary indifference even to the lawful joys and possessions of the world. The early ages of Christianity were emphatically such times. Hence much of what is said by Christ and His apostles, on the obligation of Christians to face life-long affliction

and tribulation, and the loss of all that was dear to them in this world. Hence, too, the extent to which they draw on what may be called the *compensating* power of Christianity—its great reserve—its power, through faith's vision of the future, to supply a solace and refreshment under the miseries of the present. It is true none of us can *be sure* that what befel the early Christians shall not befal us, and therefore it is always incumbent on us to cherish such a spirit, that *if* we were called to choose between Christ on the one hand, and poverty, disgrace, and persecution on the other, we should not hesitate one moment as to our choice. (And I daresay none of us would select a time of fiery persecution and struggle for very life, to push forward schemes for social improvement and secular progress.) But it is certain that the present times in this country are times of an opposite character. *We* have no open or public persecution. Domestic and social persecution there may be, bitter enough at times ; but on the other hand, in how many cases are all the domestic and social influences *in favour of* Christianity—how often does one's choosing Christ delight the heart and gratify the warmest longings of one's friends and family !

It is out of the question, therefore, to regard all the strong language used by Christ and His apostles as applicable to present times. No doubt the faithful Christian will always have a cross to carry. There will always be mortal enemies in his own heart with whom he must grapple, and whom he must labour to subdue. There will always be fierce collisions between his will and Christ's will, and in all these he must sacrifice his own. Personal afflictions and domestic

sorrows may be poured into his cup, constituting the chastisements by which God trains and nurtures His people. The absence of his Lord will always leave a desolate feeling in his heart, only to be completely removed when he is with Him in glory. But, for the most part, the very best Christians in this land are permitted to dwell, each under his vine and under his fig-tree. And there is nothing in the aspect of Providence to prevent them from gratifying the instincts of their nature, by enjoying the shade and the fruit of the vine and fig-tree as God intends them to be enjoyed; or from trying to get for their less fortunate neighbours a home as peaceful, and a shade as refreshing. Only let them bear in mind that they are running a race, and fighting a fight: that therefore they must not let themselves be *entangled* with the things of earth; but do as St. Paul did,—"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."

I have spent a great deal of time on what is but the *negative* side of my subject—in trying to remove a misconception often connected with the exhortations of Scripture as to renouncing and overcoming the world. I go on now to the more positive side—to consider the sense in which the world is intended to be possessed and enjoyed by the children of God.

1. Here let us consider, in the first place, how God has actually *made* this world for man, and given it to him; and how he has stored it with every thing that is fitted to minister to man's advantage or to man's enjoyment. Not only so, but he has furnished him with instincts,

that in their most natural and legitimate exercise, seek for these things, and take pleasure in them. Can we suppose, then, that He who has thus stored the earth for man, and provided man with the instincts that crave these stores, can be ill-pleased with him when engaged in securing them? Bear in mind (as we have already seen), how good cause God would have to be displeased if this were done *in the spirit of the prodigal son*,—if the gifts of God were severed from God himself, and we were to banish Him from the provision He has made for our good. But we are supposing a different state of things. We have returned to our Father's house. We never desire to be absent from Him any more. We dread every thing that would tempt us to an unfilial spirit towards Him. What we find around us, we regard as His gifts to us, and it is as such we would use and enjoy them. It is impossible that God can be but pleased with those that seek in this spirit to possess and enjoy the things of earth. You need not fear, in this spirit, to gratify the instincts that go after temporal good. You may gratify your love of property, your love of beauty, your love of comfort, your love of society, your love of recreation. Of course there are limits to be observed in these pursuits;* but if, within these limits, you engage in them as pursuits and pleasures which God designs for you, and for which he has adapted you, you may do so without any feeling of uneasiness, or uncertainty whether you are right or wrong. He giveth us all things richly to

* Limits of two kinds; the limit imposed by the effect on our own highest good; and the limit imposed by the effect on the spiritual good of others. (See 1 Cor. vi. 12 and 1 Cor. x. 23.)

enjoy. Every creature of God is good, and not to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. You need not mar your comfort in the enjoyment of them, by thinking that it would be better to deny yourselves every thing of the kind. Why should the children not eat the children's bread? Why should we shut our eyes to the beauty that was meant to delight us? Why should we refuse the banquet that was prepared expressly for our sake?

Instead, therefore, of blackening and depreciating this world and all that belongs to it, it seems much more filial, much more pious, and much more wholesome, to dwell with delight on its manifold beauties and advantages, and rejoice in them as tokens of God's fatherly love for his children. What beautiful objects this world presents to our view—what lovely sights, what wealth of musical sounds! What a glorious sky above us, what a Sun to brighten it by day, what gems to sparkle in it by night! What a wonderful Ocean to girdle our shores, what rivers, and streams, and prattling brooks and burns! What majestic mountains and smiling valleys! Yes, truly, "The earth, O Lord, is full of thy riches!" And how interesting, and pleasant, and manifold, are the social *enjoyments* connected with this world! The joys of childhood, the merry sports of little children, the happy scenes of early home—the pleasures of friendship, your walks and talks with intimate friends, to whom you can pour out every thought and feeling of your heart—the happiness of congenial marriage, the brightness and freshness of domestic bliss, the interest connected with the birth and growth of children, especially if they turn out helps to their

parents and blessings to the world—the pleasures of knowledge, of travel, of change of scene—the pleasures of taste and of fancy—the satisfaction there is in well done work, the joy of doing your duty, the pleasure of earning your wages, or receiving your salary, or realising the profit of honest business (for I am not going to leave that out)—the still greater pleasure of helping the needy, cheering the hearts of the down-cast, receiving the blessing of him that was ready to perish. Really, brethren, if this world be a wilder-ness, it is not the desert of Sahara; it is a wilderness well provided with palm-groves and wells of water, rich in manifold refreshments for the pilgrims that have to traverse it. It is plain that it was and is the intention of the gracious Creator, that human life should be cheered and brightened by these manifold sources of enjoyment; and that the life that is spent in absolute darkness and barrenness, is not spent in a wholesome manner. It is not for me, as a creature and child of God, to depreciate these blessings, or train myself to despise them. Rather let me thank Him for His goodness, and do what I can that others may share it, and with me bless His holy name. And if I find that by the social arrangements of the community, a large portion of my fellow-men are shut out from most or many of these cheering influences, and left to plod weary and uncheered along hard and dusty highways, is it no part of my duty to try to get them brought under the blessings which God designed for the sweetening and brightening of their life? True it is, these things will be real blessings to them only when they return to God in Christ as their Father, and accept of them as his kind gift; and for

my part, I will always put that in the foreground, and I will always tell them that God's love and favour in Christ is far the best gift of any, even though the fig-tree should not blossom, and no herd should be in the stall; but I will not for that reason leave them without any share of temporal joys and refreshments. I will not say to myself, "It is not good for these people to be too well off—when Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked, they are the better to feel that they are but pilgrims and strangers here." That lesson I will leave in *God's* hands—the only hands in which it can be left with safety. I will labour to supply my fellow-men with some of those earthly enjoyments for which their hearts are often blindly yearning; all the more, that if these be not supplied to them, they are so liable to plunge recklessly into the deadly depths of sensual indulgence.

2. But again, let us consider that God has not only given to man the earth *as it is*, to be possessed and enjoyed, but he has told him to *subdue* it and have *dominion* over it; thus giving him the prospect of getting much more out it, if he investigate its laws and properties and bend these to his use. The world we dwell in is an indefinitely improveable world; it is designed by God to be improved, and the improvement of it is intended for the greater welfare of the human race. And this improvement can only be effected through investigation of its laws, and application of these to the nature and circumstances of man. This business of investigation and application would have been one of man's chief employments in an unfallen condition; and in his present state, a strong natural instinct is ever impelling him towards it. All

persons, therefore, who are engaged in the investigation of nature, in any branch or form, or in the application of natural resources to the wants of man, are doing a work that has God's approval and blessing, if only they do it in a right filial spirit. Inquirers into the laws of matter, the laws of mind, the laws of health, the laws of taste, the laws of commerce, the laws of social order and political well-being; promoters of intercourse between one part of the globe and another; travellers in unexplored regions; traders who bring the fulness of one region to supply the wants of another; devisers of improvements who make the resources of nature available for a larger measure of good; workers in the busy system by which the world's stores are spread over the whole family; teachers, authors, writers, who scatter the light that has been already gathered, and give the impulse to seek for more,—all these, and all such as these, I regard as one way or other implementing the great command to possess the earth and have dominion over it, and aiding in accomplishing the great divine design for the increased comfort and well-being of man. It is true—alas! that it should be so—that many of them—*how* many I do not like to think—are doing this blindly, not because it is God's will, not because it is God's design, but simply because their own unchastened instincts or their own worldly interests urge them to this course. If only they did it *in a filial spirit*, seeking to work as God's children according to His will and for His glory, it would be every way blessed work. The scenes of this busy world, our crowded thoroughfares, our hives of industry, our railways, our ships, our schools of learning and of

science, how blessed it would be if the predominant idea suggested by them were—not a race for riches, not a struggle for distinction, but a great scheme of filial duty, in which the great army of workers were animated by a desire to fulfil a father's design, and by subduing the earth at once glorify Him, benefit themselves, and bless the world!

Now, this is the thought that spiritual Christianity has got to supply. Don't let us disparage the work. Don't let us be so ready as we preachers sometimes are, to depreciate secular employments. Don't let us shake our heads in despair at the secular activity of the age. Don't let us turn pale at the discoveries of science. Don't let us look askance at any of these things. The work in itself is good and right, part of a Divine scheme, the issue of which is to be greatly for the benefit of the world. But let us say to the busy workers, Don't carry on the work on an independent footing. Don't labour at your own hand or for your ends merely; but try to work in a true filial and loyal spirit; work as God's workers, as labourers in God's vineyard; and that God not a vague impersonality, not a mere algebraic sign, not the god of the pantheist, but the one, living, personal God; the God with whom you have to do; the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—the God from whom you have wandered, but who invites you to return to Him; without whom life can never be blessed, but with whom all honest work will have a fresh and living interest, and will command the blessing that maketh rich, and with which He addeth no sorrow.

There is a notion we sometimes hear propounded by secularists, that if this task of exploring the laws

of nature, and applying the resources of the world were once accomplished, man would have Providence, so to speak, very much in his own hands ;—in fact, it is a secularist formula, that "science is the Providence of life." When the laws of nature are thoroughly explored, it is said, men will no longer be at the mercy of those hidden evils which have often been so disastrous to them ; they will know all about these things, and be able to shape their course accordingly. As the serpent said to Eve, they shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. But even at the best, this escape from dependence on Providence cannot be looked for till the secrets of nature are all laid bare ; and if, as some of these persons say, man has been on earth more than a hundred thousand years, and if his future progress in discovering the secrets of nature be not more rapid than the past, it will be long enough, in all conscience, to the era of emancipation ! But if man pursues his work with a right spirit, surely the very remotest desire he can have will be, to be independent of Providence. If he cherishes the filial spirit—if he is a fellow-worker with God,—if, in all his worldly work, he has the desire to carry out God's plan, and to benefit God's family,—surely a consummation that would in a manner supersede dependence on the personal God, is the very last he would think of. It is in the very opposite direction that we would most earnestly urge him to go ; "nearer to God" is the aspiration that should ever be on his lip ; and the nearer he comes, the deeper will be his satisfaction in the thought—"This God is my God for ever and ever ; He will be my guide even unto death."

3. Once more let us consider how, according to the

Bible, Christians are to use this world *as a sphere of service to God, and of doing good to man.* In this view we shall find that the principle of looking forward to the future life encourages instead of destroying the habit of diligence in our calling, and stimulates the desire to do good to our fellow-men in every available way.

If there were no vital connection between the two states ; if the common employments of this world were utterly alien from the next ; if the one were quite unfitted to form or exercise the graces and habits appropriate to the other, it might be granted that the more you lived in the future, the less would you be fitted for the present. And hence, if you should hold that it is only when you are engaged in exercises *directly religious* that you are serving God or preparing for heaven, it must follow that the *more religious* men become, the *less interest* can they feel in the ordinary work of the world. But, certainly, this is not the doctrine of the Bible. The Bible expressly and repeatedly exalts the lawful callings of Christians, and encourages them to work on by the consideration, that fidelity to worldly duty is *an act of service to the Lord.* The Bible teaches us to look on the whole surroundings of our worldly lot as a rough but wholesome school, where, by God's help, all manner of virtues and graces must be formed and exercised, — those virtues and graces that will have their home in heaven. Faith in God, fidelity to Christ, love to man ; truth, mercy, honesty, forbearance, generosity, meekness, and many more, must gather strength and influence, from the very roughness and unpropitiousness of the climate in which they grow. Hence the better a

Christian does his worldly work, and the more he makes it the occasion of exercising such graces as these, the higher will be his reward in heaven. Nay, who can tell, but there may be a much closer connection than we see between the particular phase of our life here, and our form of service hereafter? In the case of King David, there was a connection between his early life as a shepherd and his later life as a king; in the case of the apostles, there was a connection between their first employment as fishermen, and their last as fishers of men; and who can tell whether, in the infinite wisdom of God, there may not be some important bearing, in the pursuits of Christian carpenters, and merchants, and students, and teachers, on the particular mode of service in which God is to employ them hereafter?

If such be the case, to live much in the future implies no disregard of the duties of the present, but the very reverse. Does a youth at school or college pursue his studies less diligently that he often thinks of a glowing future, for which his education is fitting him? Does an apprentice do the drudgery of his office less carefully that he sometimes fancies himself a merchant-prince, remembering, however, that nothing but diligence and perseverance can ever make him so? More especially, if he have a strong filial spirit—a strong regard and love for his father, and if the burden of every letter he receives from his father be, "Do well your present work, never fancy yourself above it, —you may not see the advantage of it, but be assured that fidelity and diligence in youth, are the sure and indispensable forerunners of success and honour in after life." So with the spiritual Christian. God has

given him a work to do in this world, and told him to do it well. God has encouraged him to look forward to a better life, and to draw hope and inspiration from the thought of it, and patience under the troubles and trials of time. If there be anything genuine in his religion, he will do his work well. He will do it all the better, for living in the future, for walking by faith not by sight, for having his treasure in heaven. He will feel that he is entrusted with his Father's honour; and the love he bears to him will make him doubly careful that in all he does, he be found faithful.

And thus, as spiritual Christianity, with its habit of living in the future, does not hinder but help a man in his own sphere of earthly duty, so neither does it hinder but help undertakings which have for their object to relieve temporal suffering, and promote temporal good. In spite of the confident remarks of secularists, I would make appeal here to facts. Time prevents me from entering into details; I content myself with quoting a sentence from the admirable work of de Liefde, just published, on the "Charities of Europe." "I have been always of opinion that nowhere could a better proof of the divine origin of Christianity and of the truth of the Gospel be found, than in the story, simply told, of some charitable institutions. Whatever the Christian religion may apparently have in common with other religions, this much is certain, that true, self-denying charity, which seeks the lost, loves the poor, and consoles the sufferer, is exclusively its own. There never were such things as charities known in heathendom, however civilised; nor were they even known in Israel before He appeared who taught His people to love their enemies, and to

exercise charity towards the harlot, the publican, and the sinner."

So also, facts might be supplied to show, that even where spiritual Christianity has given its influence to encourage sufferers to bear their wrongs patiently, and comfort themselves with the hope of the better life, it has more effectually removed these wrongs than if it had declared open war against them. Such was the course followed in the New Testament in regard to slaves and slavery, for example: and yet, as Mr. Isaac Taylor remarked, more then twenty years ago, "the deep working principle of Christianity—its force of love, as it slowly developes itself, and becomes better understood, and takes a firmer hold of all minds, and raises the standard of humane feeling, must render slavery every year less and less tolerable, within christianised communities—must at length expel it from the bosom of civilization—must drive it further and further outward into the wilds of society, and leave it, seen and confessed as such, a sheer curse, resting upon the heads and homes of its infatuated supporters; and at length bring it to be denounced, by all but savages, as a nuisance in the world,—a nuisance insufferable, to be swept away at whatever risk."*

So far, then, from admitting that spiritual Christianity, rightly understood, is the opponent, or even the lukewarm friend of secular progress, I hold that it is the very reverse. It smiles on the efforts of science, and civilization, and social reformation; and it supplies the great moving spring of philanthropy, the unwearied heavenly love that goes forth, like its Mas-

* "Spiritual Christianity," p. 120.

ter, to seek and to save that which was lost. The hope of the world, and especially of its down-trodden and suffering masses, lies in spiritual Christianity. Where, if you discard it, will you find a power to take its place? "Does it appear" (asks Mr. Taylor), "that civilization *alone* with its intercourse and traffic, its arts and its useful sciences, its town-crowding industry, and its disorderly peopling of wildernesses—its hurry and impatience of restraint—its intensity of individual will, and its contempt of authority—its uncontrollable sway of the masses—its unlooked for upturns and reverses, its passionate pursuit of momentary advantages, and its appetite for such gratifications as may be snatched at in all haste—does it appear that civilization *alone* (Christian influence not considered) is likely much to promote the personal and home-felicity of the millions it is summoning into life? Judging of what is future from what we see around us, dare we look to mere civilization as worthy to be trusted with the moral, or even with the physical well-being of the human family, and with the guardianship of the generation next coming up? Dare we, if we had the infant human race in our arms, dare we turn ourselves to that care-worn personage, our modern civilization, sitting at her factory gate, and say to her, 'Take this child, and nurse it for me?'"

Nay, verily. But if so, we must find the child's true mother. And the true mother must care for her child.

THE PURPOSE AND FORM OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

BY THE

REV. ANDREW CRICHTON.

IV.—The Purpose and Form of Holy Scripture.

The work of the teacher often is to unteach rather than to teach; and the work of the learner, to unlearn rather than to learn. To put it more specifically: the clearing away of mistakes and misconceptions, and the bringing of the matter to a definite issue, is, very often, virtually, the vindication of the truth, and the settlement of the vexed question. In the case, of controversies about the Bible, particularly, of difficulties in the way of accepting the Bible as being throughout, what I believe that it claims to be, divine and authoritative, this is especially so. The Bible has been made responsible for things for which it did not make itself responsible; has had its veracity and authority perilled on doctrines and practices which altogether want its endorsation; has been found guilty of offences which it never committed; has lost what seemed a chief, if not the chief, cornerstone, and, lo! it stands where it did, safe and luminous as ever. Like those palimpsests, those ancient manuscripts, classic and precious, which have been written over and concealed by some foolish monkish legend, and which the scholar finds, to his joy, plain and complete when the later inscription has been effaced; or those

paintings, of great masters perhaps, which the skilful picture-cleaner discovers and restores from beneath the daubing of a later and feebler hand—the Bible, as it is in its very self, its nature and claims, has sometimes got crusted over with traditional notions and interpretations, has been charged with the folly and futility of these, and must gradually come forth from beneath them, the very mind of the Spirit, and of the Spirit-moved men of old, divinely authoritative and divinely true.

The best defence of the Bible is to be found in understanding it. It grows luminous while one looks. The best solvent of difficulties is a free, full, fair interpretation. As scientific inquirers peruse the volume of nature, so let Biblical students peruse the Book of God. Surely the reverence of spirit and self-denying diligence of the former should be far surpassed by those of the latter. I believe that *indolence* is at the bottom of many of the difficulties—indolence, which shrinks from the task of piercing beneath the superficial inconsistency to its deeper-lying solution; and that *ignorance*—the ignorance of the individual inquirer, or the ignorance of a progressive but still immature hermeneutic—is at the bottom of the rest.*

* "It costs much to disbelieve; it requires submission to our God and his grace to believe. The temptation of this age is to try to find a middle path between faith and unbelief; to say that 'there is much to be said on both sides;' to think that all things must be uncertain in themselves, because many of the persons around us are at sea as to all things, as if one thought all things to be in a whirl, because they seemed so to our neighbours who had dizzied themselves; to be browbeaten out of belief; to shrink from avowing a steadfast adherence to that which must be old because it is eternal, and which must be unchangeable because it is

I have hope, then, that I may sweep away some misconceptions, and may obviate some difficulties, if I direct attention for a little to some proveable characteristics of Holy Scripture, which I group together under the general title of its purpose and form; my course of thought naturally leading me to bring out more especially its *humanity*, which the orthodox doctrine of inspiration holds to be as inseparable from its divinity, as the humanity is inseparable from the divinity of Christ.

The first and most general truth about Holy Scripture is that it is a book-revelation. How it came to be so, it is not our work here to inquire. The questions of inspiration and the canon do not fall within our present plan. It is a book, or written, revelation. There is also an oral revelation, to the recording of which part of the written revelation is devoted. It is important for us to connect these two together. Why God should so order it that his revelation should, after a certain period, become written instead of spoken, is surely plain enough. The prophesyings of individual prophets were limited in their reach, were addressed to comparatively few, were for a season and a time. How natural and how blessed that the many prophetic voices should blend in this one prophetic voice, speaking to all the ages and all the world! It is important to connect the oral and written together as in fact the same thing. This book is the prophesying of the prophets, is the written-out or printed preaching of

truth; to pick something out of revelation which, it thinks, will not be gainsaid, and to relegate all else to be matter of opinion; an indolent, conceited, soft, weak, pains-hating trifling with the truth of God."—*Dr Pusey on Daniel the Prophet*, p. 561.

those ancient preachers; who, however, differed from other preachers in ancient and modern times in this, that they spoke and wrote as moved by the Holy Ghost. I need scarcely explain here that the use of prophecy to mean prediction or foretelling is a narrow and not very scriptural one. A prophet was simply a supernaturally-endowed preacher. The Bible, in narrative, and exhortation, and prediction, and psalm, and familiar epistle, is simply, so to speak, discourse after discourse, prophesying after prophesying. Moses, and Samuel, and David, and Paul, and John are here in writing, instead of in audible speech. The spoken and the written revelation are one. They have the same character and obey the same laws. Difficulties in the case of the one tell equally in the case of the other.

But this is only throwing the question of the need of a book-revelation a little further back. Is it necessary to suppose, that, by prophet or Bible, God has ever spoken to man at all?

That there must be revelation of some sort, follows, I think, from the idea of a personal God. Revelation and atheism, it has been said, are the alternatives; or, if the second be not atheism, it is pantheism at least—pantheism, in which humanity, by becoming *self*-conscious, will attain its knowledge of God. If you are a Theist at all, the absence of revelation, a terrible silence between earth and heaven, is inconceivable to you—impossible. The God who speaks not is not, or is not God. If the supernatural find no voice, no open way whereby to break in on the world of nature and of human life, then it is not, is not at least to the world and to humanity.

But there is a revelation, it may yet be said, not supernatural—a revelation in nature and humanity. God has spoken when he created—speaks on in that continual creation which we call providence. "The light of nature sheweth there is a God." Humanity and the world retain the impress of the eternal die, with which they were stamped at first. Without oral teaching or written word, our hearts would confess God and open themselves to God. There is reason: there is conscience. There is a human virtue: there is a human truth.

It were a very mistaken honouring of the Bible that would deny that—though Biblical defenders have sometimes delighted to undervalue the light of nature, and to deny to mankind, apart from revelation, any virtue, any truth. I believe this to be a sort of Nihilism. I believe this to make "God a deceiver, and humanity a lie." St Paul said that the Gentiles "having not the law, are a law unto themselves."* They have a Bible, they have a revelation, apart from this Bible and this revelation; the natural and the supernatural are alike true and authoritative. Sceptics against conscience are little better than sceptics against Scripture.

But you are forgetting the fact of the fall, it may be said. This natural revelation is in fact obliterated. The Bible of man's heart is a blank page, or a page disfigured with all that is dark, or grotesque, or vile. I do not forget the fact of the fall; but the fall has not made reasonable and responsible beings into sticks and stones. That is not the meaning of spiritual death. There is a virtue and a truth—a

* Romans ii. 14, 15.

moral science or philosophy—a natural ethic and natural theology, drawn not from the Bible but from the conscience of the race. I admit the corruption of man's nature, but deny that it makes him a devil on the one hand, or a mere insensate stone on the other.*

There being then a natural revelation—a revelation containing in it not only physical but also moral truth, it may be said, and it has been said, that a supernatural revelation, a book revelation like that of the Bible, is simply unnecessary. There never was a more mistaken conclusion. I have shewn that I am no enemy to the

* "Nevertheless, as regards its capacity of recognising both the character and the authority of divine law, the conscience is upon the whole intact. The corruption of our nature has not so vitiated the conscience as to invalidate its conclusions, where it discriminates between right and wrong, or deprive it of its right to rule and to be obeyed. If it had, our guilt would have been less, and our recovery would have been impossible. For it is through the conscience alone that a fallen, but yet free, intelligence can be reached. It is to the conscience that the violated law appeals. It is the conscience that accepts the sentence of condemnation. It is the conscience that pleads guilty of sin as the transgression of the law, and welcomes the assurance of a sufficient expiation, and an adequate satisfaction."

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"From the beginning God revealed Himself and His will, by means of words, to men. He spoke to them of his own character, purposes, and plans. He placed them under an explicit and formal obligation of obedience to an explicit and formal commandment. That, however, does not impeach either the competency of reason to prove the truths of natural religion, or the competency of conscience to establish the principles of natural morality. It is of the utmost consequence, for the interests of revelation itself, to vindicate the independent validity, both of natural theology and of natural ethics; to assert not the sufficiency, indeed, but the legitimacy and trustworthiness of the light of reason and the jurisdiction of conscience."—'Reason and Revelation,' by Dr. Candlish, pp. 107 and 123.

doctrine of a light of nature, but I say unhesitatingly that it is insufficient. Taking it at its very best—supposing the moral nature of man to be as when he was created, the moral conceptions and convictions of man to be Edenic in their purity, there would still be much that they could not reach or discover; a knowledge of God and fellowship with God which would be utterly beyond them. And so, we find that, before the fall, apart from the fall altogether, God entered into supernatural communication with man. Adam, otherwise than reflected in his own heart and in the glassy streams of Eden, saw the face of God. And I think it is plain that, fall or no fall, there would have been revelation of a supernatural kind; the contents in great measure different, the method of it unknown to us, but still, revelation.

For I take it that this inward light in man, this natural revelation, is, more than anything else, a kind of receptivity, a possibility of divine intercourse and inhabitation. It is the image of God in which God made man, that man might be able to behold the face, and hear the voice, and know, in a measure, the nature and the will, of God. This, in any case, in the best of cases. How much more necessary since the fall has revelation become, necessary to restore what has been lost, as well as to lead upwards and onwards in the knowledge of God! The starriest night of nature yearns for the revelations of the supernatural dawn; how much more the starless night with its utterly unillumined gloom! The Protevangelium was given by God in the very hour of the fall.

We have now before us, all the materials for a settlement of the controversy,—which, in one form or

another, must be familiar,—as to the relation between nature and revelation, as to the relation, particularly, between reason or conscience and the Bible. The negative party have arraigned the Scripture at the bar of reason and conscience, and condemned it there. The positive party have sometimes, from confusion of mind, seemed to deny to reason and conscience any standing in the matter whatever.* The truth, I believe, lies between those two positions. There is a natural and a supernatural revelation—a light from within and a light from without, and the one is as certain and divine as the other. With *this difference*, that, by reason of corruption and darkness, the real utterances of the voice within are hard to ascertain. Still they may be ascertained—it is possible for men in their natural state, to distinguish in some measure between right and wrong, between true and false; and so, if the oracle without and the oracle within contradict each other, it is a conflict not of God with man, but of God with God, for in the image of God made he man; not of authorities subordinate and supreme, but of authorities co-ordinate with each other, authorities, in fact, which, if you trace them to their fountain, are not two but one, not different but the same. Such contradiction of course is impossible, and, if it seem to occur, you are obliged to say,—this is not reason or conscience, on the one side; or this is not Scripture, on the other.

I fortify myself here with the words of Bishop Butler—"Now," says he, "what is the just consequence from all these things? Not that reason is no judge of what is offered to us as being of divine revelation.

* *Vide* Birks' "Bible and Modern Thought," page 343.

For this would be to infer, that we are unable to judge of anything, because we are unable to judge of all things. Reason can, and it ought to judge, not only of the meaning but also of the morality and the evidence of revelation. First, It is the province of reason to judge of the morality of the Scripture; that is, not whether it contains things different from what we should have expected from a wise, just and good being; for objections from hence have now been obviated, but whether it contains things plainly contradictory to wisdom, justice or goodness, to what the light of nature teaches us of God."* I hold with Bishop Butler. I see no escape from this. The real cause of the dread, which many have, of this co-ordination, if you like to call it so, of the natural and supernatural revelations—of conscience and the Bible, is to be found in the misapplication of the principle. My resource, in every alleged difference between the two, would be either, on the one hand, that reason and conscience were applied to matters beyond their field, to the answering of questions which transcend them altogether, or that their utterance was misread; or, on the other hand, that the Bible was misinterpreted, made responsible for things of which it did not itself assume the responsibility; its approbations and disapprobations, its narrative of the teaching and practice of men, and its own teaching and practice, confounded with each other. Patience, I believe, will solve every difficulty; when the fire of scrutiny has burned itself out, the residuum will be found to be gold, yea, most fine gold.

* Butler's Analogy, Part II., cap, 3.

To the heart of man the Bible comes, and finds a response to it there; its choicest evidence there. It speaks a known language; it supplies a more or less conscious, always terribly actual need. If there were nothing in man that responded to it, nothing that leapt forth to meet it, its oracles would be melancholy enigmas—to the heart that lied it would seem a lie. Something like this, and yet infinitely removed from this, is seen, when the Word of God addresses itself to the unrenewed heart, and the Holy Spirit is *not* given. It is intelligible, and yet not intelligble. It offers needed help, but there is a barrier between. Its voice is not unknown, but strangely sounding, and from afar. But, let the Holy Spirit illumine the blind eyes and warm the cold heart; which He does, not by giving eyes where there were none, and a heart where there was none, but by kindling the eye with light, and making the old heart new; and then the divine in man confesses the divine in Scripture; spirit leaps forth to meet with spirit; conscience and the Bible meet and embrace, like an older and a newer messenger from the same Lord—and thus, an evidence is constituted, and a faith in the divine verity of holy writ implanted, against which the wildest surges of objection and difficulty must dash themselves in vain.

Dealing now, more strictly, with the form of Scripture, we find, in the second place, that it is of various authorship, and belongs to various ages of the Church's history. A firm belief in the unity of the Bible is quite consistent with a continual remembrance of the fact that, while it is one book, it is also many books, that its divine unity utters itself through a wonderfully

varied humanity. From Moses to St. John, whose gospel is perhaps the latest, as it is certainly the grandest, book in the Bible, are a decade and a half of centuries. The Biblical period is the most brilliant in the history of the world; it covers the whole field of the noblest of the ancient civilizations. The greatest days, that both east and west have known, fall within it. While the world was building up its highest kingdoms was built up the kingdom of Messiah. Amidst the most magnificent products of human intellect grew up this Book, which needs a divine as well as human mind for its explanation.

Now, in order to exalt the divine in the Bible, it is not at all necessary to depreciate the human. There are frequent misapplications made of the Scriptural saying, that God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.* Weak, here, does not mean so much, actually and veritably weak, as weak, measured by the world's standard and in the world's esteem. You may take human intellect at its very highest and attribute it to the Bible, and you will find that it does not explain what you find there, that the miracle of inspiration is as great as ever. The difference, in height, between Arthur Seat and Mont Blanc, does not appreciably diminish the distance between Arthur Seat and the stars; and the difference, between the greatest and the least of men, is but a drop in the infinite ocean of the distance between man and God.

Looking at the Bible itself, apart from any theory about it, we find it, on its human side, to be the work

* 1 Cor. i. 27.

of men, all of them with more or less of intellectual force and greatness, and some of them towering like high mountain-peaks above the rest. Some at least of these books are written by men, who, in their own time, were without a peer, and who, to this hour, remain enrolled among the mightiest of mankind—the leading minds of the world. Think of Moses, with his manifold culture, the richest and rarest of these early times, and his extraordinary grasp of the principles on which society and national life are built: one to whom the Roman Numa is but a child. Think of David the Psalmist, who, as a poet, belongs not to the Bible only but to humanity. Think of Solomon, whom the queen of Sheba came from afar to see. Think of Isaiah. Think of Daniel, the highest subject, both in Babylon and Media. Think of Paul, apart from his inspiration altogether, a scholar, thinker, theologian. Think of John, of whose personal history the Bible tells us little, but about whom, from earliest Church tradition, we gather what we had otherwise been led to suspect, that he is not unworthy to be named with the Grecian Plato. These men, uninspired, would have been great men still, in action or in thought. Their divine mission roused their slumbering powers: their inspiration of God made divine meanings and truths to flow along the channel of their human thought and speech. I think it might be shown that, in the Bible, God illustrates those principles of His acting, that "whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance,"* and that "to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."† To

* Matt. xiii. 12 † Luke xii. 48.

the greater men He has given the greater message, to the lesser men the less; using each, not lawlessly, capriciously, but according to his capabilities, his circumstances, his character, his personal history; so that, in this holy book, there are none of the spasms, convulsions, incoherences of heathen oracles or diabolic possession, but the strong, quiet, healthful outcome of thoughts and words divine through all their humanness. Yea, as in Christ himself, the divine and human are sweetly wedded, sweetly work together, till, in the one intense light, you cannot distinguish the stronger and the feebler ray.

Now, all this, which I hold to be quite reconcileable with the strictest doctrine of inspiration, nay, to be distinctly involved therein, makes the humanity of Scripture a lawful and important subject of study as well as its divineness. But, at this point, I meet with, and must distinctly protest against, that system, or rather method, of interpretation, defended by Professor Jowett, in his exquisitely beautiful and exquisitely unsound essay, in Essays and Reviews, and, if not defended, very largely proceeded on, for example by Dean Stanley and other writers of the same school.* The foundation principle of this system is, that the Bible is to be interpreted just like any other book—that is, that you are to go to it without a theory, and use the same canons of interpretation as you would use, in dealing with Plato or with Shakspeare.† There

* *Vide* Dean Stanley, "The Bible, its Form and Substance."

† "What remains may be comprised in a few precepts, or rather is the expansion of a single one. *Interpret the Scripture like any other book.* There are many respects in which Scripture is unlike any other book: these will appear in the results of such an interpre-

is a certain amount of truth in this principle; but, in the application which is made of it, it is really no better than false. That it contains somewhat of truth appears from the fact, that the writers of that school have made most valuable contributions to the department of Introduction—to the history and literature of the Bible. That it contains a great deal of error appears from the fact, that the same school—its bolder and more consistent men at least—have eliminated from the Bible the most distinctive tenets of Christianity, and are left standing very much on the ground of mere natural religion.

I accept all that is positive in the principle, but reject the negation which it contains. It is true, that the meaning of an inspired writer will be largely elucidated, by a knowledge of his modes of thought and personal character, by a knowledge of the materials which were before him, in the shape, of previous Scriptures, or previous writings not inspired, by a knowledge of the language which was most familiar to him, the style which is characteristic of him, the general tendencies and point of view of the time in which he lived. But it is not true, that his meaning

tation. The first step is to know the meaning, and this can only be done in the same careful and impartial way that we ascertain the meaning of Sophocles or of Plato. The subordinate principles, which flow out of this general one, will also be gathered from the observation of Scripture. No other science of Hermeneutics is possible but an inductive one: that is to say, one based on the language, and thoughts, and narrations of the sacred writers. And it would be well to carry the theory of interpretation no further than in the case of other works. Excessive system tends to create an impression that the meaning of Scripture is out of our reach, or is to be attained in some other way than by the exercise of manly sense and industry." Essays and Reviews—Professor Jowett "On the Interpretation of Scripture." Section 3.

will be exhausted thus, that his words mean nothing but what such a mode of interpretation would lead you to attribute to them, had no undercurrent of divine thought—no significance for the far future time hid in them in germ at least. Take the almost creative, almost prophetic, power of human genius at its highest, and it is no measure whatever of the creative might and prophetic insight of the Book of God.

Still, I firmly hold, that the interpretation of the Bible will be defective, unless full effect be given to its humanity—its humanity without error, like the Lord's humanity, without sin. And I believe that many precious meanings will be evolved, and many objections disposed of, by an attention to this. The Bible writers had the previous mental preparation which other writers have, used materials as other writers do. Traces of earlier documents in the warp and woof of Scripture, quotations of, or allusions to, sayings or writings not inspired, have introduced into the Bible no element of uncertainty; the Hand that placed them there has taken care of that. We may hunt after earlier sources, or separate writings, if we please, of which the Bible itself frankly puts us on the track—books of Jasher, Chronicles of the Kings, Sayings and Songs of Solomon—and yet believe, that here, in the accomplished result, we have all the Scripture, and nothing but the Scripture.*

* *Vide* Professor Plumptre's discourse on "the Prophets of the New Testament" in his recent book entitled "Theology and Life." In a foot-note to page 95, he gives, from the Old Testament, *sixteen* names of works, which must have formed part of the Hebrew prophetic literature, but which were not admitted into the canon of Scripture, and whose only memorial is due to the Bible.

The orientalism of the Bible is another source of difficulty, and, by attention to it, many difficulties will be removed. Its scenery is different from that to which we are accustomed; its imagery is unfamiliar. The eternal truths have found a form and framework, to understand which, we must search in the distances of the present, or in the history of the past. How does the traveller, who comes with his tale from the Desert and the Promised Land—from lonely Sinai—from fair Galilee, and snowy Hermon, and lofty Libanus—from the desolations of Jerusalem—from

"Bethlehem's glade, and Carmel's haunted strand,"

make the page of Scripture gleam with light, and many of its darknesses unfold themselves, till the dim grows clear, and the old and familiar is fresh and new!

Still further, these inspired compositions are of different kinds, as well as by different authors in different ages. There is a tendency to treat them as all didactic compositions on the same plan, to deal with the Bible as if it were a treatise, instead of being, as it is, a conglomerate of all the various forms in which thought and feeling express themselves. In a deep sense of the word, it is throughout didactic—a prophesying of many voices, as I have already said. But it is history—it is song or poem—it is prophetic rhapsody—it is aphorism or apophthegm—and the most systematic portions of it are in the form of pastoral letters. There is not one treatise on a theme from beginning to end: the Bible is related, at every step of it, to the experience of social or individual life. Now this fact, a sufficiently evident one, has

often been forgotten, and the forgetting of it has allowed a large class of difficulties to arise and establish themselves. The firmest belief in inspiration is quite reconcileable with recognising in Scripture compositions of various kinds, constructed according to, and obeying, the laws which rule such compositions.

Thus, the history must be allowed to be history, and not an ideal narration in which moral or religious truth is conveyed—history, in which, the writer does not commit himself, nor commit God, to an approval of the human misdeeds or blunders which he chronicles. Any one, for example, who quotes the story of the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter as an objection to the inspiration of Scripture, has forgotten this simple rule. Again, reported conversations, whether in the narrative or dramatic form, must be allowed to be such, and God and the inspired writer are not to be credited with what any of the interlocutors may say, unless thay have, in some ascertainable way, assumed the responsibility. Those who, on the one hand, refer to the book of Job as supplying store of objections to the inspiration of the Scriptures, or who, on the other, treat every word which is uttered by Eliphaz the Temanite, or Bildad the Shuhite, as divine and authoritative, have forgotten this simple principle. Once more, inspired psalm and song must be held, along with its divine fountain, to spring out of the depths of individual and national experience, and so, to be deeply tinged with the peculiarities of these; true and touching for all time, just because true and touching for that one—not like the music breathed by a harp when some skilled hand has swept the strings, but the veritable outcome of a living human spirit,

informed, not violently, nor against its nature, but in sweetest harmony therewith, by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The modern reaction, against the mechanical view of inspiration, which made the books of Scripture mere repetitions of each other, and the writers of Scripture nothing but senseless instruments in the Spirit's hand,† was led by Coleridge, in his "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit." He seems to see no middle way, between this mechanical theory and one which would make it possible that Scripture should be crusted here and there, as a recent writer said, with "dark patches of human passion and error." I think I have showed you that there is a middle way, that an attention to the form of Scripture reveals the fact, that in

* See the chapter, "Critical Objections," in the very valuable work of Dr Bannerman, on "The Inspiration of Scripture."

† "He (the Holy Ghost) so raised and prepared their minds, as that they might be capable to receive and retain those impressions of things which he communicated to them. So a man tunes the strings of an instrument that it may, in a due manner, receive the impressions of his finger, and give out the sound he intends. He did not speak in them or by them, and leave it unto the use of their natural faculties, their minds, and memories, to understand and remember the things spoken by Him, and so declare them to others. But He himself acted their faculties, making use of them to express His words, not their own conceptions. * * * *

Secondly, He acted and guided them as to the very organs of their bodies, whereby they expressed the revelation which they had received by inspiration from him. They spake as they were acted by the Holy Ghost. He guided their tongues in the declaration of His revelations, as the mind of a man guideth his hand, in writing, to express its conceptions." *Owen on the Holy Spirit.* Book ii. cap. 1. In the case of Owen, and, doubtless, of many other supposed holders of the mechanical theory of Scripture, the whole thing is due to one-sided and extreme modes of expression, like those which are employed in the passage which I have quoted.

sinless, errorless, but thoroughly natural human forms, the divine has made its home. And so you will find that his celebrated passage, which I now quote, however it may tell against a mechanical theory of Scripture, has no force against the true one, places no real difficulty in our path—"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof—sang Deborah. Was it that she called to mind any personal wrongs—rapine or insult—that she or the house of Lapidoth had received from Jabin or Sisera? No; she had dwelt under her palm-tree in the depth of the mountain. But she was a mother in Israel; and with a mother's heart, and the vehemency of a mother's and a patriot's love, she had shot the light of love from her eyes, and poured the blessings of love from her lips, on the people that had jeoparded their lives unto the death, against the oppressors; and the bitterness, awakened and borne aloft by the same love, she precipitated in curses on the selfish and coward recreants who came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. As long as I have the image of Deborah before my eyes, and while I throw myself back into the age, country, circumstances, of this Hebrew Bonduca, in the not yet tamed chaos of the spiritual creation; as long as I contemplate the impassioned, high-souled, heroic woman in all the prominence and individuality of will and character, I feel as if I were among the first ferments of the great affections—the proplastic waves of the microcosmic chaos, swelling up against, and yet towards, the outspread wings of the Dove, that lies brooding on the troubled waters. In the fierce and inordinate, I am made to know and be grateful for

the clearer and purer radiance that shines on a Christian's paths, neither blunted by the preparatory veil, nor crimsoned in its struggle through the all-enwrapping mist of the world's ignorance; whilst in the self-oblivion of these heroes of the Old Testament, their elevation above all low and individual interests, —above all, in the entire and vehement devotion of their whole being to the service of their divine Master, I find a lesson of humility, a ground of humiliation, and a shaming yet rousing example of faith and fealty. But let me once be persuaded that all these heart-awakening utterances of human hearts—of men of like faculties and passions with myself, mourning, rejoicing, suffering, triumphing—are but as a *Divina commedia* of a superhuman—oh, bear with me if I say—Ventriloquist; that the royal harper, to whom I have so often submitted myself, as a many-stringed instrument for his fire-tipt fingers to traverse, while every several nerve of emotion, passion, thought, that thrids the flesh and blood of our common humanity, responded to the touch—that this sweet Psalmist of Israel was himself as mere an instrument as his harp, an automaton poet, mourner, and supplicant; all is gone—all sympathy at least, and all example. I listen in awe and fear, but likewise in perplexity and confusion of spirit."*

So far as all this claims, for the Song of Deborah and Psalms of David, a veritable humanity as well as inspiration of God, I agree with it. So far as it ascribes to them human passion or imperfect morality, so denying or explaining away their inspiration of

* Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit. Fourth Edition, page 65.

God, I do not agree. And, with the difficulty thus suggested, I shall deal under my next and concluding proposition, which is as follows :—

The various compositions which form the Holy Scriptures are one amidst all their manifoldness, and proceed on a progressive plan. Unity and progress are two grand features of the Bible. It is many voices, but it is all the while one voice. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The Bible is the history of redemption, tells the story of the mediatorial kingdom of the Divine Redeemer. And it does this progressively. The beginning contains the end, the earlier the later ; but only in germ, living germ, whose outgrowth and development is a necessity. The promise, given to Adam after the fall, of the woman's seed who should bruise the head of the serpent, is the great biblical utterance on which the changes are rung, and the meaning of which is unfolded, down to the last syllable in the canon of Scripture. The sun, in the sky all the while, climbs slowly to its high noontide ; the light, kindled by God amidst the darkness of spiritual ruin, brightens and broadens slowly into the fulness of New Testament grace and truth.

Now, the fact that the Bible is one, as I have said—the articulate expression of one great thought—accounts for its antinomies, as they are called, in doctrine, and also its seeming contradictions in matters of fact. It would appear at first sight that its writers contradict each other ; nay, sometimes contradict themselves. Their statements are always partial, one-sided, and not systematic—that is, they give just the one view of the truth or fact with which they are concerned at the time, leaving all other views of it to be

given as occasion may arise. In one place the sovereignty of God seems to be so stated as to obliterate human freedom; in the other, human freedom, so as to obliterate the sovereignty of God. Grace and nature, love and law, faith and works, are all illustrated, not as they would be in a doctrinal system, but as they come up, one by one, in the history of churches or of men. Hence, while each passage and part of Scripture is to be taken in its own meaning and application, without being stretched on a Procrustes-bed, and informed, with significances it never dreamt of, by the interpreter, all are to be taken together, one with another; for they are the separate notes of one harmony, and out of their seeming discord, to the hearing ear, the grand sweet music of eternal truth will come. Paul is imperfect without James, and Paul and James without John; but bring the three lights together, and what a glory follows! The interpretation of Scripture is often narrow, limited to particular points and views: Scripture itself is wide, consistent, all-inclusive, as the round world, or the heaven with its stars.

But the *unity* of the Bible carries along with it, and implies, the *progress* of the Bible. The very fact that it is on one great plan produces seeming inconsistencies in its earlier and later portions—inconsistencies which are all of them explained by the progressiveness of its teaching. The truth is one, and the life is one; the earliest and the latest are fundamentally the same. But the revelation is gradual; its periods, the instruments employed in it, the fulness of its outflowings, are on an ascending scale.

Now, apply this principle of the unity and progress of the Bible to the question of the relation between

the Old Testament and the New, and it will help you to solve that question. The Old and New are one; therefore, in the New must be continued on, everything in the Old which cannot be shewn to be, by the New itself, abrogated and made to cease, as belonging to a prophetic dispensation, and fulfilling a temporary use. But the New is an advance on the Old; so that, while the same things are found in it, their horizon will be widened, and their breadth and depth of spiritual meaning will be increased. Familiar illustrations, of the cases to which this principle applies, will be found, for example, in the Paedo-baptist controversy, in the Decalogue controversy, in the public worship controversy, in the marriage law controversy. I cannot enter on these, and would only say, that most people who engage in them seem to me to have no principle in their minds at all, or to forget it whenever they find it convenient to do so; cutting the tie between the New Testament and the Old when it suits them, or making it as strong as links of iron when it suits them to do the opposite.

Another source of difficulty, of which this principle disposes, is, the peculiarity of the quotations by later writers of the sayings of earlier ones. These are always characterised by a singular freedom; they almost invariably quote the earlier words, in a deeper or shallower sense than that which they originally bore. The fact that the Bible is one book, with an unchanging Divine authorship, as well as changing human authorship, one and progressive, accounts for this. The later inspiration had a freedom in dealing with the earlier which one human writer could not have in dealing with another human writer, because

the inspiring Spirit was one. And so Christ or Paul may quote some Old Testament saying in a limited and narrow application, unforeseen by the man who uttered it first; or in a wide and deep application, unforeseen by him; because his thought was also the Holy Spirit's thought, and the later sense was hidden in the earlier as germ, or ran beneath the earlier as an undertone. I know that this seems to ascribe to thought that was *human* a certain infinitude, but then it was also *divine;* and the mystery of the relation between the finite and the infinite is not peculiar to the incarnation of Christ, or the inspiration of Scripture. Wherever we encounter it, we must content ourselves with certain facts, and forbear to tempt the deeps of theory—forbear vainly trying

> "To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."

And, last of all, the unity and progress of the Bible solve that favourite objection, which is drawn from the morality of the earlier Scriptures. I have committed myself, in my earlier remarks, to hold it a fair objection, where the dictates of conscience are ascertained, and, for the morality enjoined or commended, Scripture makes itself responsible. But in each case—the case of the Avenger of Blood, for example—the case of the Song of Deborah, in which the assassination of Sisera by Jael is lauded as a heroic deed—the case of the sacrifice of Isaac—a patient interpretation will solve the problem. The circumstances of the time are to be considered; the typical relation of Israel to the heathen nations; the fact that the revelation was growing up amidst a human weakness and darkness to which it wisely accommodated itself, not in the way of error, but

of imperfection, which are two very different things —imperfection, which did better work at the time than perfection would have done, and which, before the book was finished, was to be gathered up and lost in the light of the perfect day. And then, if difficulty still remain, I am not sure that all things which contradict a nineteenth-century sentimentalism, contradict the eternal morality. What seems strange enough on the misty, swampy level, may be clear and plain on the mountain-top. There is a good deal in the apology which the biographer of Oliver Cromwell makes for what was called the massacre of Tredah :— "Terrible surgery this ; but is it surgery and judgment, or atrocious murder merely? That is a question which should be asked and answered. Oliver Cromwell did believe in God's judgments, and did not believe in the rose-water plan of surgery—which, in fact, is this editor's case too!"* and the case of some other people.

I have brought you a long way, but I think I have given you some reason to believe, that the difficulties of Scripture will disappear, before a fair, and thorough, and systematic interpretation. Calmly the Bible invites your scrutiny ; the Lord Jesus invites it in the Bible's name. And a true faith in the Bible, and true love for it, will echo the cry, "Search the Scriptures!" In their light we shall see light ; amidst their reassuring voices we shall cease to fear. It is a secret unbelief which cleaves to old words and notions simply because they are old, and dreads inquiry and the letting in of the daylight at the window. We need not be cowards for the Bible,

* Carlyle's Cromwell, II., p. 453.

when it never dreams of being a coward for itself. The truth is ever life and peace, and the falsehood or suppression of the truth is inward misery and then death.

I have no sympathy, however, with the pet modern plan, of giving up the letter of Scripture as involved in inextricable difficulties, and supposing that the spirit and the power will still remain.* No! the medium through which the heavenly light comes cannot be impure. Error or defect in the form any more than in the substance there cannot be. Take refuge, from the myriad objections which this position summons up, in diligent study of the Scriptures, or in patient waiting for the solution which God will send. And let us not forget that for the task of explaining and defending this holy Book there is supernatural aid, to be won by faith and prayer. The Holy Spirit that inspired the writer's meaning and his words, has his best interpreter in the Holy Spirit dwelling and shining in the reader's heart.

* "Some have tried to assail a book here and a chapter there; in one place a few sentences, in others a mere phrase; and they would persuade us that these may be allowed to fall away and perish, as withered leaves might drop from a tree which continues to flourish. It is a more true figure to say that the result would rather resemble the slow degrees by which life passes from the dying body: first the extremities are chilled under the grasp of death; than the fatal numbness steals gradually onward, till it fastens on life's strong hold in the heart. Or we might liken it to the dying out of an illumination in a royal mansion; first, there is darkness in some distant chamber; then it steals along the corridors and halls; one room after another vanishes from sight: one light after another is extinguished; till the whole building rests in unbroken obscurity, when the last lamp of all has been withdrawn."—*Hannah's Bampton Lectures*, 249.

PRAYER AND NATURAL LAW.

BY THE

REV. JOHN DUNS, D.D., F.R.S.E.,

PROFESSOR OF NATURAL SCIENCE, NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

V.—Prayer and Natural Law.

The subject of this Lecture is held at present by many thoughtful men, to be one of great interest and importance. While I freely acknowledge its difficulty, I make no pretensions to impartiality in the discussion which follows,—if by impartiality be meant the freedom of the understanding from all bias of Christian sentiment and affection. The theme is too much in the line of some of the purest and deepest experiences of homely walk, and of personal work and trial for this. Besides, the heights of impartiality are far up where the snows lie. We dwell in the valley where the mists are said to be. Yet there the warmth is felt; there the trees grow, and the flowers follow the sun, and the birds sing; there homes for human hearts cluster; and there even, in "God's light, we see light." Without a figure, let me say in the outset, that the question is to be discussed from the point of view of belief in the personality of God as the "Hearer of Prayer," and of confidence in the efficacy of prayer. The subject is thus one which goes straight home to the very heart of our strength and hope.

One or two topics which lie on the threshold must be glanced at, in order to a clear view of the state of the question, though they have not any very close and direct bearings on it.

I am not called here to deal with miracles. The illustration of the harmony of miraculous manifestations of the power of Jehovah with, so-called, evenly working natural laws, is, from the view-point of natural science, a subject of deep interest, and presents a wide field to competent thinkers, especially when we associate the geologic history of the earth with that of the Adamic period. But even a brief and imperfect outline of this ground would lead us far away from our present task.

Again, most who have given some attention to this matter, must have noticed how much haze and uncertainty surround the views of many as to the relation of God to the laws of nature. Not only is the meaning of the term "natural law" very imperfectly understood by them, if indeed it be understood at all, but language is used in speaking of God and nature, as if they were believed to be in some sense one. It is no doubt true, that several of the class now referred to, would count you guilty of a breach of charity, were you to set them down as holding such notions, though warranted by a fair and honest construction of their words.

Now, let us inquire, for a moment, how the matter stands. Few, if any, will refuse to acknowledge the presence of special adaptations in nature,—such fitnesses between means and ends, structure and function, as at least suggest to the observer the likelihood, that intelligent Personality exists above and behind them. Unless blinded by prejudice, we are forced to this by the well-known laws of our own minds. Take, for example, the breast fins of the fish, the wings of the bird, the fore-legs of the horse, and the

arms of man? These are not only formed on the same plan, but, under various and wide modifications, they contain the same bones. Or, take the foot of the pigeon, of the duck, and of the hawk, or even the teeth of the hare, of the dog, of the ox, and of the tiger, and associate the modifications of the structure of these organs with the functions which depend on them, and the habits of the various animals to which they belong! Would you, in the full knowledge of these, not be ready to call that man by a hard name, who would persistently refuse to recognise adaptation in these? And if adaptation, why not a personal designer? I am anxious to have your assent here, because it will give definiteness to our views when we come to discuss the special subject before us.

Perhaps, a thoughtful review of the relation between the artist or the machinist, and his work, might shed some light on this topic, which has, one cannot well see why, come to be associated with the present question. Take, say, a picture and a reaping-machine. It is hardly possible, even to imagine that these could have been produced by unconscious and unintelligent workers. Nor can we easily mistake the varied evidences of the action of adaptive wisdom and of a determining will, for the manifestations of mere blind force and unconscious, unthinking energy. Moreover, in both cases the product tells us much more than that the worker is intelligent. It says, most plainly and emphatically, that he is higher than his work; that he was conscious of his intention in realizing it; yea, even that the work had, in a sense, independent existence in his own mind before it was revealed to other minds,—before, as a picture, it was put on the

canvass in colours that never fade, or as a reaping machine, it was realised in cunningly adapted modifications of wood and iron. This all implied personality. The picture influences the onlooker. It appeals to some of his most influential tastes—his love of beauty, for example, his appreciation of symmetry and the like. It introduces him to the thoughts, if not to the moral tastes, of the artist. Thus, then, as regards the mere act of fashioning, the analogy between God's work and man's holds good. Before he had realized even the workable materials, and before that touch of the creative hand, interpretive of thought, was laid on them, he was aware of their fitness to enter into certain combinations, for they were created thereto, and to assume certain forms, because these forms were from eternity in his own mind. Thus there was One, even the Almighty, before the materials, who knew what they were equal to, even as he was equal to the work of introducing them, when as yet they were not.

But this was not, as has been foolishly alleged, an interference with the divine personality, as if so much of this personality must have been transferred to nature, or merged in it, and thus have become part of the laws under which nature was put. This impression influences many who would not care to own it, and has become the dead fly in the ointment of their higher beliefs. When man realizes his sense of beauty in the picture—when he gives material expression and permanence to ideal wisdom, or strength, or trust—and when he exhibits his inventive skill in the complicated machine, is his personality thereby interfered with? Or has he lost part of it in such acts? On the contrary the ability belongs to man to

realise objects distinct from himself. It is absurd to merge the worker in the work. Mind and its manifestations are no more one, than the steam engine and its speed are. Man, with materials for work, realizes in them intentions of which he was conscious before they were brought out, and these, when thus realised, are distinct from his thoughts. They bear plain testimony to the presence and the action of will, but are not the same as the will. God provides even the materials, and thus shews *His* greatness. He is not, however, creation. He is the creator. The work is His. It is not He. It is other than himself. It is, as it were, outside of his personality. Now I do not see how we can avoid this inference. But having reached it, we see that the works of nature are not the same as the laws of nature, and the laws in turn, are not God. Neither are they the action of a transferred creative personality. In our prayers, then, we aim at the heart of him who is above nature, and whose freedom is no more bounded by the laws which he has impressed on it, than the artist's freedom is by the thought which he has embodied in his picture, or the machinist's by the personal skill which he has transferred to the machine.

I have long thought that this whole question of the relation of God to the works of his hands, and to the laws which he has assigned to them, has been too much limited to the point of view of natural theism. In discussing it we have been far too anxious to escape from that suspicion of prejudice, which many hasten to entertain the moment you profess to be under the influence of Christian thought. Nevertheless I think it can be made good, that the Christian

point of view is truer and more in harmony with the present demands of science than the theistic.

No one, I imagine, would venture to assert that science has no higher aim than to minister to mere physical wants. It is not only to serve the body or to foster pride in vulgar material prosperity, that she sends her busy and untiring workers into the wide fields of nature. Like a true child she wishes to know the father's thoughts, that, knowing them, she may reveal them to others besides her own children, in order to influence their spiritual nature. Yet when science has told all that she can tell, much still remains to be known, because man's spiritual nature has a side which needs to be influenced from above, from heaven rather than from the earth. Now, I can make comparatively little of the external world, of its phenomena and its laws, until I have learned to associate it with an active Power over it, and a working Will above it. In a word, with a person whose power and will are associated by me with truth and love, and whose manifestations are seen by me to be ever in behalf of truth, and to embrace rational objects of love. But let me bring the external world into relation with the highest wants of my soul, as personally loving a love-worthy One, whom I have discovered to be both Creator and Redeemer, then how full of meaning, how rich in motives to worship, how suggestive of motives to work every thing comes to be! This is put with great force and beauty by one of the foremost thinkers that the world ever saw: "The head," he says, "of every man is Christ." Brought to Him by faith and love, and made complete in Him, we see Him as "head of all principality

and power," for "by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible," "all things were created by him and for him." Then comes an announcement of the grandest kind, "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

This is, in every sense, the highest, yea, shall I not say, the most impartial point of view. The merely theistic one is not for a moment to be compared with it. The theist speaks of a God who *may* be love-worthy, but there is nothing in nature either to reveal this clearly, or to turn the heart to Him. The Christian associates essential and veritable Godhead with one as Creator, whom he has learned to love, to revere, and to serve as Redeemer. So called pure theism—the natural idea of an almighty one, an eternal and absolute God, dwelling in the depths of being, far off, remote, shadowy—is enough to make one tremble under a feeling of utter loneliness in the cold night of the world. But the dark disappears, and the sun breaks through, bringing warmth and revealing beauty, when I know that He who created all things, is the same who has become to me a Saviour, a Companion, a Friend. The same voice now speaks to me in the constant working of the laws of nature, as in the moral precepts of the written Word. The World and the Word are only parts of that one great revelation of Himself which He has made to me. Nature is no longer regarded as cast out. Matter is no more associated by me with what is essentially evil. He who guides all nature's laws is the same

one who, as my Redeemer, High Priest, and everlasting Father, hears prayer.

It has ever been a source both of perplexity and weakness, to those who have tried to think on these things, and who have sought to have all made plain to them, to have cherished an impression that, somehow or other, He who holds the forces of the external world is not the same whom, mayhap from childhood, we learned to love, or, in riper years, to trust intelligently as a covenant God. Indeed, to this is to be traced the attempt to make good a case in behalf of prayer for spiritual blessings, while its place and proper efficacy are denied in regard to temporal mercies. But this is vain. He who is believed to hear prayer created all things, and He by whom we are redeemed disposes of all events. He it is whose controlling power we call providence. Spiritual blessings and temporal mercies are equally in His hands. He who reigns in Grace rules in Nature.

But to come closer to our subject: The doubt and hesitancy on this question, which have recently been fully expressed, are not new. The same views have frequently been discussed before, though, perhaps, under different forms. One of the most striking features of error is that it never dies. It changes its face to the times, but it never gives up the struggle against truth. It suits itself to the culture and the social advancement of the age, and tries to use these against Him to whom we are indebted for all true progress in knowledge, as well as for all true moral health.

The point at which the difficulty as to the relation of prayer to natural law takes its rise should be

clearly seen and understood. It is held to have been first broadly stated by scientific workers, because, it is said, they had been forced thereto by the facts of science. They had seen evidences of forces working evenly and without a mistake, like the stars in their courses, "unhasting, yet unresting." The experience and observation of all the workers who have ever lived, it is alleged, have been in the same direction. There have been no interruptions in the grandeur of the action and course of law, at least, since the beginning of the present epoch. Yea, when geologic time has been taken into account, they have found that throughout millions, not of years, but of ages, the stars had shivered in cold wintry skies, the moon had walked in her brightness, and the sun had shone forth in his strength. There had been sea, and land, and atmosphere; rain and wind, summer and winter, cold and heat. And the question has arisen—"May there not have been creation by law?" At least, is it not clear that law reigns? But there are two records, or rather two parts of one record. Thus far the testimony of the one—the World. What says the other—the Word? "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Thus, according to the Bible, we have the Creator's testimony to His own work. He has spoken to man, and made known a fact, which all true science acknowledges to be beyond its scope — the fact, namely, of the origin of all things. This discovery became the foundation of all the revelation later made to man. The earth owed its origin to the direct forth-putting of creative power, and it has been in the great grasp of that power ever since. Thus the views of Scripture as to God's relation to the earth. In its

present condition it was prepared for man, and man is now under the special charge, care, holy guard and keeping of his great Creator. He has so guided circumstances, He has so controlled events, even from the beginning, as to make them serve to discipline man—to provoke him to action, to break in on his natural slothfulness, to give strength to his will, to give depth to his love, and to hold out to his hopes objects which, though known on earth, are never to be fully enjoyed until we are called to leave it. Now, in this divine ministration, the same God, we are assured by the Bible, has used the sun in the heavens, the stars of the sky, the waves of ocean, the course of mighty rivers, the rolling thunder, the forked flashing lightning, the noisome pestilence, the deadly plague, the hail, the blight, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and even the tiny insect itself, in ways which, while they *might* at the time harmonize with the laws under which they were all originally put, yet gave to those influenced by them, the well grounded persuasion, that they were all under direct sovereign control, and, as such, had been specially used for their sake. Can they then resist the impression that not law, but the Lord, reigns? Thus the issue. It is one of great moment. Science claims for her sons all sympathy and credit, when they tell to the world the wonders of Natural Law. Good; but why refuse the same to the simple-minded, earnest student of the Word, and of providence regarded in the light of the Word? Charity is not one-sided. If the reader of the Word of Life can point to the record of innumerable evidences of direct interference and constant control, why not acknowledge

his sincerity when he appeals to these, and asks, as one profoundly convinced of the fact, "Does not the Lord reign?"

But, perhaps, science has been made responsible for more than should have been attributed to her. It is doubtful if she has been so forward in putting the question of unbelief as has been alleged. The fact is, it has, for the most part, been put by men who are in a great measure destitute of true scientific attainments—men who have had no experience of the great yet pleasant toil and weariness in work which is the lot of all who are fairly and honestly entitled to put these questions. These men, who seize on the discoveries and findings of science, in order to twist them to their own purposes, have done no more than stand at the mouth of the mine, and steal the silver as it was brought up out of the dark into the light of the revealing sun. *They* have never gone down into the dark, never left their cushioned chairs or warm places of ease by the fireside, in order to reach the understanding of very difficult subjects, on the outside of which, forsooth, they jauntily hang the new-fashioned garments of old, very old, unbeliefs.

Now, what at the present time is wanted, is the exercise of a spirit which will calmly look at both sides, and will candidly inquire, if there be not good standing-ground for all in search of truth, even in the face of the full acknowledgment of both classes of phenomena. I believe there is, but it is difficult to reach, not so much because of its height or its distance, as because of the mental quality which must distinguish all who would seek to stand on it. "The kingdom of men found in science," says Bacon, "is like

the kingdom of God. It can be entered only in the character of little children." As far as this qualification goes, it is, then, demanded equally from the true student of the Word and from the painstaking observer of Nature. The Scripture record contains the account of many interferences with nature which we can bring under no law. What, for example, can we make of the passage of the Red Sea by the hosts of Israel as they marched away from the land of their bondage? We believe it actually took place, and are humbled before God as we confess our ignorance of the mode in which it was accomplished, and of the conditions which the waters assumed, in direct opposition to one of the best known laws under which water has been put. We cannot explain how this was. We attempt an explanation on mere natural principles, and feel ourselves baffled at every point. Where or in what shall we find rest? In nothing save in the acknowledgment of the action of a Divine Will and Almighty Person, as One able to control the law originally impressed by Himself on fluids. *How* it was, we know not; *that* it was, we know and believe. Conscious ignorance sets us apart as little children.

Such, too, will be the experience of the sincere worker in the rich, wide field of science. Take the history of the earth? Has its march really been as steady as some theorists would have us to believe? Is it not rather the case, that the world has been built up after a fashion not of the most regular kind, and in a very unequal way? There is proof that, at one time and another, creative energy suddenly, yea, almost violently, broke forth after long periods of rest. Whole worlds of life have once and again been

destroyed. New species have been introduced, and a most complicated new series of physical conditions been realised in consequence. Yet, in connection with some of these changes, forethought of a most remarkable kind had been working, as, for example, in preparing coal, great ages before man, who was to use it, appeared on the earth, and, in subjecting it to conditions in order to mineralisation, which demanded the lapse of vast periods before it could be as useful as it now is. Where, too, we might ask, are the *graptolites* of those old Silurian seas, which rolled over the areas now held by some of the richest of the southern counties of Scotland? Where the ganoid fishes of that "Old Red," in which Hugh Miller, one of Scotland's noblest sons, worked to such purpose? Where the shore swamps and the luxuriant vegetation, which, long ages before the sun looked down on Eden, prepared for us the coal in the basins of the Forth and the Clyde? A thousand such questions might be put.

There have, then, been breaks in the succession of the great ages. But how shall the student of science account for these? How, but in the sovereign action and control of creative will and forethought! True, on the very threshold he is met by much which he cannot explain. Shall he doubt on this account? To doubt is to lose blessing, for he has been brought face to face with these things, in order that he too might feel his ignorance, and become as a little child.

The state of the question thus gradually becomes clearer as we proceed. And now we may ask, what is "Natural Law," what is "Prayer," and on what hypothesis can we explain the harmony between the

action of the former, and the profitable exercise of the latter?

Any property natural to, and inherent in matter, whether organic or inorganic, is held to be a law of matter. Natural Law is thus the stamp of God's will on creation, and the action of law is simply the manifestation of this. A law is not a cause but a condition of matter—of substance. As, however, nothing in nature stands alone, the action of any one law implies the existence of a highly complicated series of inter-actions, in spheres sometimes closely related, but often far removed from its own. These relations are chiefly in view when the term "Natural Law" is used. Law might thus be said to be, the constant working of creative will. In the words of *Oersted*, "the laws of nature are the thoughts of God."

It is the business of science to bring facts together by a process of induction, and by another of deduction to determine the laws under which these facts are. For example, the periods in which the Earth and Mars revolve round the sun are to each other as 3,652,564 is to 6,879, 796. Respectively they are distant from the sun as 100,000 to 152,369. Now, if you multiply each of the first two numbers by itself, and each of the last two by itself twice, it will be found that the proportion of the first two results is exactly the same to each other as is that of the last two. This was Kepler's discovery, and it is known in science as his third law. Its mathematical expression is,—"the squares of the periodic times of any two planets are to each other in the same proportion as the cubes of their mean distances from the sun." The delicate adjustment here must strike you all, and you might

be ready to affirm, that when once fixed it must have been unalterably so. I purposely take an extreme illustration. But what is this law? Is it not simply the stamp of creative will, and, if so, is it not conceivable, that he to whom its action in all time was known, and in the eye of whose purpose its innumerable relations were all spread out, could, when he determined it, have made a provision for its modified action, at one moment in a thousand, or if you will, in a million of years, as an answer to a cry like that which rung up to heaven from the valley of Gibeon —"Sun, stand thou still." You must either grant the possibility of this or deny the omniscience of God.

Thus far as to law. We ask now "What is prayer?" And here let there be no mistake. Prayer is an act in which two persons—God and man—have a part. It is not simply the cry of a sorrowful soul, or of an anxious mind, or of a broken heart; but it is that cry reaching the ear and entering the heart of God himself. Man cries, and God hears. Man asks, and God gives. Man prays, and God answers. Prayer is a chain, one end of which we believe reaches the bosom of the Father; the other end is in our own bosom. There are, no doubt, intermediate links which we do not see; but it would even be unphilosophical to plead here defect of knowledge and the limits of man's thought, as a reason or an excuse for not believing. See where this would land you. You pluck a red rose from one bush, and a white one from another near it; but do you withhold your belief of the whiteness in the one case and the redness in the other till you can explain the cause of the difference? There are even more mysteries in matter than in morals;

and why make mystery an excuse for unbelief in the latter, while you refuse to let it influence you in the former?

Having seen what the external world says of natural law, let us now inquire what the Word says of prayer. 1. *God hears prayer:*—"He forgetteth not the cry of the humble" (Ps. ix. 12). "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Ps. xxiv. 6). "Call on me, and I will answer thee" (Jer. xxiii. 3). "Every one that asketh receiveth" (Mat. vii. 8). 2. *It is associated with the foreknowledge of God:*—"Thy Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him" (Mat. vi. 8). 3. *The answer is often made to depend on the spiritual condition of the suppliant:*—"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. lxvi. 18). "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James iv. 3). 4. *It is not limited to spiritual blessings:*—"Abraham prayed unto God, and he healed Abimelech" (Gen. xx. 17). "Ask of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" (Zech. x. 1). "When ye pray, say, Give us day by day our daily bread" (Luke xi. 3). 5. *It was Christ's habit:*—"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. v. 7). Such passages might be multiplied. The design in every one is to create in us the belief that God is influenced by our prayers.

I am fully alive to the strangeness, if not mystery,

implied in such a view as this, so soon as it is stated; but certainly the words of Scripture warrant it. Thus such expressions as the following occur in the Word of God:—"It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king;" "He is slow to anger, and repenteth him of the evil;" "Let it repent thee concerning thy servants;" "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim, &c.?" "Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."

Now there may be impenetrable mystery to me in all this, but of one thing I am sure—there is no mockery of my wants, and wishes, and longings. Yea, there is far more here than the mere speaking after the manner of men. There is something like feelings and affections, and sympathies akin to our own, and I am not to lose the sweet satisfaction which this is fitted to bring me, merely because I cannot explain it all to myself or to others. But parallel with this statement we must set the distinct and unmistakeable acknowledgment of the eternity and immutability of God, and willingly leave the solution of this difficulty with Himself, as indeed we must leave many more difficulties, even in regard to very common matters. In time He may open to me the mystery, and shew the divine simplicity in the very point of harmony. Meanwhile, we are convinced that the antagonism here is apparent only, not real. My prayers are like the one side of the arch, and the unchanging character of God like the other; but both meet in the keystone—in this case the sovereign will of God himself.

But while this is so, let it not be thought that we refuse to look the difficulty full in the face. It is

felt. It is unreservedly acknowledged, but it is not believed to be a stumbling-block to any soul. Looking at it fully and candidly, there are two hypotheses, according to either of which, it seems to me, we may make good the harmony between the action of natural law, and the answer to prayer. One of these I associate with the limited knowledge of man; the other with the will of God In either case, however, we must assume the doctrine of the omniscience of God, the hearer of prayer. There is no ground on which to argue the question if this be refused, but granting this, which indeed is common to Theism and Christianity, the ground is clear and firm.

I. Suppose, then, that we, readily and without reserve, acknowledge all that our objector could affirm as to the unchanging character of the action of natural law, and that we accept without questioning every alleged fact referred to, as illustrative of this! How far in doing so have we gone away from the belief common to all true Christians, that God hears prayer, even for those temporal blessings which come to us in the line of the constant working of these same laws? Not one step. We have done no more than characterise their action, as far as the aspects go which meet our eyes. Temporal blessings are associated in our minds with a system of natural causation named providence. Spiritual blessings become ours in the administration of a kingdom whose forces are everywhere intertwined with those of providence in such a close, intimate, and complicated way, that in very few cases are we able to draw a broad line of distinction between the two. But, in full view of this

we are in the habit of believing that all answers to prayer come to us, not supernaturally, but in the course of ordinary causation. How is this? Simply because we feel that the Creator is above creation, the controller of events greater than these, and the All-Wise equal to the management of ever working laws, so that their action shall harmonise with his purpose, and the fruit of all shall seem to the one most deeply interested, to be the direct interference of sovereign will, and in no sense the manifestation of mere natural causation. Schiller puts this thought finely,

> "The world's great architect,
> * * * * * *
> Grandly he sits behind vicegerent laws,
> He the great master workman."

The points at which we meet with God may be regarded as in the circumference of a well defined circle, but there may be many other circles lying within this, which, if seen as clearly by us as the outer one, might shew us God's method of using the forces of that outer circle in answering prayer, without altering those aspects in which they are chiefly regarded by man. But is it worthy of man? Is it even in the spirit of a true philosophy to limit God to our view of natural forces, and to reason as if those which we see are the only ones in exercise, or, if there be others, as if it were impossible they could act on these, without altering the features which we have been accustomed to regard? These features, we believe, are of the utmost consequence to us in our daily life. Yea, we have regarded them as ordained, in order to the growth and preservation of our bodies,

and to the education of our spiritual nature. But it is said, if we are daily to see them altering in those features which we had believed to be permanent, and because permanent, of the greatest value, where would be our walk in confidence? Where our calm trust that to-morrow shall be as to-day? Would not all be doubt, uncertainty, hesitancy? This is indeed the point of deepest interest. But according to the hypothesis now under notice, no such evidences of interference are to be seen, and yet God may so hold in his hand—so guide—forces which lie behind those which we observe, as to make what we see fulfil our desires, work out our wishes, in a word, answer our prayers. The trial of our faith will at this point simply consist in this, that we do not understand *how* this can be. No great trial, I presume!

Take an illustration. A friend leaves a healthy home to visit one of those crowded closes in a large city, from which the sweet light of heaven and the air which is loaded with health are shut out, with the view of helping some working man's household to fight that battle, sore and difficult yet very noble, to which so many in crowded cities are called. As he enters 'the stair,' he is told that typhus and death are in the dwelling. Shall he proceed? Yes! May not his words strengthen a father to bear his burden? May they not reach a mother's heart, and direct her to Jesus as the One who comforteth? He enters, and afterwards returns home with poison in his blood enough to kill three men. Typhus strikes him. Laid on his bed the doctor says there is no hope. But a wife, a sister, a mother, or Christian friend, believing in the efficacy of prayer, cries unto God for him.

The burning fever relaxes its terrible grasp. Death, as if plagued by prayer, draws reluctantly back. He recovers; believing, as those who prayed believe, that recovery came in answer to prayer. But the child, by whose bedside he had pleaded with God, and for whom the parents had pleaded, recovers also, as all believe, in answer to prayer. Now, I do not ask, merely, if the benefit to each is to be lost, that comes in the persuasion that, true or not, prayer has been answered. But, I do ask you to notice three facts here. (1.) That we are right in tracing the fever to the neglect of well-known natural laws. (2.) That while those to whose neglect this might be traced suffered; another, who was not to blame, suffered likewise. (3.) That, contrary to man's hope, one in the house, where death had been, recovered and our friend against hope got better also. In the latter case we are not entitled to trace the recovery to the influence of good air, a comfortable dwelling, and devoted medical skill, because in the former case all this was awanting, and yet there was recovery. Yet we see no miracle. All was in a very natural way. But is there one who will venture to characterise the belief in the efficacy of prayer in these cases as silly superstition, and deny to God the power to answer the cry of his children, by the forth-putting of influences which lie beyond the view of the physician and the friend, but which yet interfere not with those natural sequences which all behold? Yea, which not only never clash, but act in divine harmony with the laws, which it is the physician's work to keep in healthy action—to guide, and even to modify in order to cure the disease-stricken bodies of men.

II. I find the alternative hypothesis in the will of God. Though well aware of the strong prejudice which exists against this, on the part of some men of culture, who allege they cannot rest in anything which they are not able to think out, I am, nevertheless, persuaded that it is the most satisfactory foundation on which to build our belief of the prevailing power of prayer. It is, moreover, the point of view of Christianity—meaning by that word Christ's life in the individual man, as One in him, the true substitute and surety, and as abiding in him the eternal life. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." By this abiding, and in it, the will of man is brought into harmony with his heavenly Father's will. Thus prayer comes to be no more than the prompting of the Spirit of the Father in us to ask what, when we ask aright, it is the Father's will and wish to give This promise, then, whose fulfilling is conditional to our having Christ's words abiding in us, reaches to all times, looks with a face of love on all his people, and is the constant encouragement for the poor and needy, the sick and sorrowful, yea, even for those gladdest in him as assuredly saved, to ask, to seek, to knock, to cry, to pray.

I wish to put this as broadly and clearly as I can, because it seems to me to lie at the very root of the difficulty. And, in putting it thus, I may freely challenge the statement of even one fact in science in contradiction of what I believe to be a great truth, namely, that, even in nature, phenomena are impenetrable if you do not associate them with constantly working divine will, and this none the less that we hasten to

name this working the manifestation of natural causation. We may, indeed, lose sight of the personal will as underlying phenomena, in the very use of this word. Nevertheless all true science bears most emphatic testimony to the fact, that creative thought is before and above creation, that personality is more than principle, and that the action of will is above mere law. This subject might be set amidst rich illustration, drawn from recent discoveries in natural science, but to do more than name it would lead us away from our present task.

The direct action of creative Will in nature and of sovereign Will in grace, both of which are suggested by this subject, opens a very wide field for thoughtful inquiry. The doctrine has, however, met with much opposition from thinkers at one time and another. In our own country this has especially been the case. It was a stumbling block in poor David Hume's way. Even to the gentle, loving, tender-hearted, and sweetly poetic Thomas Brown, it was foolishness. To George Combe it seemed almost hideous. I unwillingly name Brown in this connection, but it is done with the intent of indicating how much use is at present made of his views without acknowledgment. "It is quite evident," he says, "that even omnipotence, which cannot do what is contradictory, cannot combine both advantages: the advantage of regular order in the sequence of nature, and the advantages of a uniform adaptation of the particular circumstances of the individual. We may take our choice, but we cannot think of a combination of both; and if, as is very obvious, the greater advantage be that of

uniformity of operation, we must not complain of the evils to which that very uniformity, which we cannot fail to prefer (if the option had been allowed us), has been the very circumstance that gave rise." Combe has taken these thoughts out of that setting of warm sentiment and fine feeling, which almost softens our view of them when we read them in Brown's lectures, and has set them in ice. "Science," he says, "has banished from the minds of profound thinkers belief in the exercise by the Deity, in our day, of special acts of supernatural power, as a means of influencing human affairs; and it has presented a systematic order of nature, which man may study, comprehend, and follow as a guide to his practical conduct. Many educated laymen, and also a number of the clergy, have declined to recognize fasts, humiliations, and prayers, as means adapted, according to their views, to avert the recurrence of the evil. Indeed, these observances, inasmuch as they mislead the public mind with respect to its causes, are regarded by such persons as positive evils."

The evil referred to here, was the potato disease or blight, and now we have the very same words used in regard to the rinderprest, by men who might at least have had the honesty and heart to say with that son of the prophet who lost the axe head in the Jordan,—"Alas, sir, for it was borrowed."

But views of this kind proceed on the baseless assumption that, "Providence" is no more than the expression of undeviating laws—the subordination of the great first cause to secondary causes, stamped on nature, or acquired by nature, and now universal and

unchangeable, if, indeed, they are not eternal. Thus, to acknowledge the working of divine sovereign will seems, to such thinkers, to necessitate arbitrary action, spasmodic influences, wilful interferences, so as to destroy what is now held to be permanent, undeviating, unchanging.

I at once acknowledge a difficulty here. But then the difficulty is not all on my side. I can point to interferences with nature, say in the geologic history of the earth, and in the destruction and introduction of species, as formidable to an opponent's argument as any that can be advanced against mine. We are on a level then as to this. But my position is stronger than his. I believe that God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; yet I believe, too, that this is not inconsistent with his power to hear prayer. There is no doubt much which I cannot explain; but choose your ground, in matter or in mind, and I am ready to point out a hundred things which you cannot explain either. You are troubled, yet I have rest. Intellectually, I see an hypothesis which satisfies me. Experimentally, I am yet more at ease as to this whole matter. Yea, my belief in the omniscience and eternal forethought of Jehovah, leads me to enjoy the privilege of prayer, and to leave all the difficulties with Him, who, to win me to trust Him, has not spared even His own dear Son—"When we were yet enemies, Christ died for us." And now in conclusion allow me to say, that I know not any sure standing ground in the midst of present spiritual disquietude and intellectual unrest, except this foundation laid in Zion; and no refuge from the dangers of unbelief, but in Christ Himself; and no true and abiding sense

of safety in the heart of sore trials, but that which comes to child and old man, to young man and maiden, to rich and poor, to learned and unlearned alike, in the simple belief that God has sent His Son to save sinners.

THE SABBATH:

BY

ROBERT S. CANDLISH, D.D.,

PRINCIPAL OF THE NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

VI.—The Sabbath.

I THINK it right to say at the outset, that I had agreed to take part in this series of lectures, and had selected my subject, and that both of these facts had been publicly advertised, before the speech was delivered in the Presbytery of the Established Church at Glasgow which has occasioned so much discussion. I will frankly add that, in the view of that speech and that discussion, had I foreseen them, I would have avoided the topic, and that I now regret my having to deal with it in the circumstances which have emerged. Of course, I need scarcely explain that this feeling does not arise out of any difficulty or unwillingness on my part as regards the statement of my own views. But I have a deep conviction that the controversy has now come into such a position as to demand something more elaborate than a sermon or lecture, an address or pamphlet can supply. It is not, certainly, that either the speech or its defences and apologies display much fresh learning or fresh thought. The Bampton lectures of Dr Hessey (1860), with Cox's valuable though one-sided digest, furnish well nigh all their erudition. But the question is raised in a form involving large and wide issues, not only as to the

Sabbath, but as to the entire plan of Divine providence, from the creation to the consummation of all things. The view to be taken of that plan, and of its consistent and harmonious development through all the Divine dispensations, is very closely bound up with the argument about the Sabbath, especially as now raised. This may not be matter of regret; I do not think that it is so. But it makes it difficult to do justice to the subject in such a paper as I now read, prepared amid the hurry of other avocations. And it surely imposes upon our men of leisure and learning the obligation of a thorough scholarly and scriptural treatment of the whole case.

I have another preliminary observation to make. I doubt if I can bring my subject, or my manner of treating it, fairly and legitimately under the general heading of this short course of lectures. This doubt has grown upon me since I began to gather materials, especially of the most recent sort.

For in truth, so far as I can see, modern thought has done little or nothing either in the way of changing or modifying the state of the question as regards the Sabbath itself, or in the way of altering, or at all affecting, its relation to the gospel system as a whole, or to any of its practical details.

Let it be kept in mind that the discussion of the Sabbath question—by which I mean the question or controversy about the origin, perpetuity, and universal obligation of the Sabbatic institution—dates from a comparatively late period in the Church's history. It began in England with the rise of Puritanism, or of the protest against High Churchism, in the days of Elizabeth and James the First. I cannot better de-

scribe its origin than in the words of Dr Hessey. Admitting the "low tone of feeling on the subject of the Holy Day" which then practically prevailed, he adds this statement: "Meanwhile, the state of theology in reference to it was equally unsatisfactory. The chief writers against the prevalent desecration of Sunday were not found among persons who represented the moderate and reserved views which I suppose the Church to have advisedly entertained. A new sect had sprung up, whose members were called sometimes Precisians, sometimes Disciplinarians, but more generally Puritans. They were shocked at the forgetfulness of God which manifested itself at all times, and on the Lord's own day especially. The government, political, social, and ecclesiastical, under which it existed, must evidently be unsound. Was there any remedy for it? *They took the Bible into their hands, and decided that in it they would find a model of the true polity.* And in particular they decided that in it they would find a model for God's worship superior to anything visible, and yet applicable to the present hour."* Thus far Dr Hessey. He goes on to allow that though "perhaps there was not exactly what they wanted" in the Bible, "there was something like it." I make nothing of that allowance. But I hold him to have fairly put the issue raised at that crisis, and raised then for the first time, between those "who represented the moderate and reserved view which the Church," as he supposes, "had advisedly entertained," and those who "took the Bible into their hands, and decided that in it," as regards this and other matters, "they would find a model of the true polity."

* Bampton Lectures, p. 271.

It is here and thus that, properly speaking, the literature of the Sabbath question begins; for it is here and thus that the Sabbath question itself comes up. All that had been previously written on the subject, by the fathers, the mediæval divines and schoolmen, and the reformers, was simply incidental; occurring, I mean, in the course of argument on other topics, or of general scriptural exposition. The precise point now in debate—the substantial identity of the Sabbatic institution from the creation to the end of time—was never formally handled as a matter of special inquiry and controversy.

I am aware that some will be disposed to regard this as the very reason why we should fall back upon the notices, more or less explicit, in the earlier works of the divines who wrote before the dust and din of wordy strife confused and confounded the Sabbatic atmosphere. Fain would I do so. For I believe, and I might show some ground for my belief, that these good and godly men were, in the main, practically, almost as Sabbatarian, as good observers of the Lord's day, as I am myself or would have any one else to be. But, at the same time, I protest against the notion that truth, on any debateable topic, is better ascertained by looking to those utterances about it which have preceded the thorough controversial discussion of it, than by the study of the discussion itself and of its results. And therefore, very specially, as regards this Sabbath question, I object to the mass of references and quotations from writers prior to the real rise of the contest being held to form part of the literature of the Sabbath question. They may furnish the mate-

rials, so far, of its discussion, but they are not themselves, properly speaking, any part of its literature.

This may seem a merely formal or verbal criticism, a quibble or cavil. I do not think that it is so. And at all events, I have another remark to make of a much more serious nature, as to the use made of these old authorities, particularly in our own day.

It has been painfully forced upon my mind that there is a very marked contrast between the way in which the opponents of our views on the Sabbath question deal with the Fathers and the Reformers, and the way in which the supporters of our views deal with them. That I may not be accused of vague allusion, I name Dr Hessey and Mr Cox on the one hand, and Dr Fairbairn and Mr Gilfillan on the other. I find the former eagerly seizing upon any sayings of these great men that seem to favour their views, and making no account whatever of qualifications or statements of an opposite tendency. The latter also I find bringing forward passages from the writings of the same men, giving plain and strong countenance to our doctrine of the Sabbath. But there is this difference. Fairbairn and Gilfillan do not ignore or pass by the apparently antagonistic utterances that are exclusively dwelt on by Hessey and Cox. They bring them forward, and deal with them, and profess to account for them, as I may by and by try partly to show. Meanwhile, it is not surely difficult to determine which of these two courses indicates the greater learning or the greater fairness.

But I gladly avail myself of Dr Hessey's mode of putting the alternative as to the state of the question, as it stood when it was for the first time fairly raised.

It is always important, in judging of any controversy, to know and understand the points of view, or points of departure, from which the disputants respectively approach the subject. In this instance, especially if we direct our attention to our own country, in which the discussion first arose, it is not difficult to adjust the matter. There can be no doubt that the High Church Divines had a strong inclination towards what may be called the ecclesiastical point of view, while the Puritans took their stand upon the Scriptural or Biblical. The former, being strenuous assertors of church authority and power, particularly with reference to the appointment and observance of holy days, disliked a mode of argument which separated entirely the Lord's day from other festivals, and placed the ground of its observance on an entirely different footing. The latter, again, being zealous for the supreme and exclusive authority of the Divine word, preferred to make their appeal directly to its teachings. It is not of course meant that either party wholly overlooked the position occupied by the other. The Puritans were accustomed to take full advantage of the testimony uniformly borne by the Fathers to the setting apart of the first day of the week, as an ordinance recognised universally in the Church, from Apostolic times downwards, and resting largely on Apostolic authority; and in so far as these venerable writers seemed to come short of the full Sabbatic doctrine of Scripture, they professed to explain and account for the shortcoming. On the other hand, their opponents did not refuse to deal with the facts and statements of the Bible; but they came to the study of them with minds already biassed in a certain direction by

their patristic and ecclesiastical leanings. They looked at Scripture too much through the eyes of the Fathers.

On this point let me here read an extract from a Review of Dr Hessey's book, generally, and, I believe, correctly, ascribed to Principal Fairbairn. He has been speaking of the authority of the Fathers on the point of the alleged essential difference between the Lord's day of the Gospel, and the Sabbath of the Decalogue, as to which he says: "These good men did not properly know what they were writing about." And he goes on thus—"This touches on a phase of patristic theology which, had it been more thoroughly studied by Dr Hessey, would have saved him from the inconsistency now adverted to, the inconsistency of an admission that the Sabbath had a character more evangelical than one has been accustomed to attribute to it, and is scarcely the exact institution to the continuance of which the Fathers objected, and kept him from pressing those earlier Fathers into a service which they are specially disqualified from rendering. Their acquaintance with the earlier revelations of God was comparatively meagre and imperfect. In particular, the relation between the new and the old in the Divine economy was just the point on which their discernment was most defective, and on which their judgment should be received with the greatest caution. It was the field where they most frequently lost their way, wandering sometimes into puerile conceits, sometimes even into entangling and pernicious errors. The disadvantages of their position naturally led to this result, and form an adequate explanation of it. They were, for the most part, bred

in heathenism; and coming to know Christianity before they knew much of what preceded it, they wanted the discipline of a gradual and successive study of the plan of God's dispensations, and the help of a well-digested scheme of Scriptural theology. They knew the Bible in portions, rather than as an organic and progressive whole; and even for that knowledge they were but poorly furnished, either with grammatical helps or with formal expositions. Is it surprising if, in such circumstances, they should have but imperfectly caught the meaning of Old Testament Scripture, and should have appeared not always at home in proper acquaintance with its contents? Even Jerome, the most learned of them all in the Hebrew Scriptures, occasionally discovers what would now be regarded as a somewhat discreditable looseness and inaccuracy of statement. And both he and others, in applying what is written on the institutions and history of former times, often leave us at a loss to say, whether the true or the false predominated; spiritualizings, the most arbitrary, go hand in hand with the crudest literalisms, and the most palpable Judaistic tendencies are fostered, while evangelical principles alone were thought to be honoured.*"

* "Take the following from Tertullian as a specimen of this very subject of days. Pleading, for the propriety of instituting and observing stated seasons of fasting, he thus defends himself against the charge of Judaizing, or, as he calls it, Galatianizing: "In observing these seasons, and days, and months, and years, we plainly Galatianize, if we are observant of Jewish ceremonies, of legal solemnities; for the apostle dissuades us from these, forbidding us to persevere in keeping up the Old Testament, which has been buried in Christ, and pressing the New, because, if there is a new condition in Christ, the solemnities ought also to be new." As if the mere connection of an essentially legal observance with

"A multitude of similar instances might easily be produced, if this were the proper place, showing that, in what relates to the connection between the view of the old in God's dispensations, the views of the Fathers continually oscillated between the two extremes of excessive and arbitrary spiritualism on the one hand, and grossly literal and fleshly applications on the other. In this particular respect, they are in irreconcileable variance with themselves, and should not be appealed to as authorities on what they are so little qualified to determine. In truth, in this field, they are not the venerable doctors of the Christian Church, but rather its junior students; and while their testimony as to the religious observance of the Lord's-day is to be received with implicit confidence (for so far it was their veracity and Christian feeling alone that were concerned), small account is to be made of their judgment respecting the alleged contrariety between the Lord's-day and the Sabbath. Dr Hessey himself has unwittingly admitted as much, though with apparent unconsciousness of having thereby surrendered an important link in his argument."*

Thus far Dr Fairbairn. We are apt to think that

a Gospel era or event could transmute it into an evangelical rite There is here in embryo the principle of all the ritualism of Popery. Chrysostom saw the matter somewhat more correctly; he saw what Tertullian failed to see,—that stated times and ordinances of fasting, even if connected with specific Christian events, were not thereby relieved of a Judaistic character; yet he also wanted clearness and strength of conviction to urge their abandonment, as foreign to the genius of the Gospel; and his advice is a compromise between the truth he apprehended, and the practices he allowed."

* North British Review, No. lxvii. pp. 224, 225.

the early Fathers, living so very near the fountain-head of gospel truth and the Christian development, must have been in circumstances peculiarly favourable for forming a sound judgment, as well as giving correct information, on all matters relating to the doctrines of the faith and usages of the church. If the proposed English version of their writings goes on, it may open the eyes of many to a somewhat strange and startling discovery of human weakness and prejudice making sad work, in more ways than one, immediately upon inspired guidance being withdrawn. Certainly the consideration stated by Dr Fairbairn ought very materially to modify our respect for their opinion and deference to their authority, as regards the Scripture doctrine of the Sabbath.

Following out the line of thought thus suggested, I would briefly call attention to a fact respecting the origin of the Christian Church which is not, as I think, always kept sufficiently in mind, when appeals are made to the early Christian writers on topics of this sort. I refer to the manifest departure from the original Divine ideal which the unbelief of the Jews necessitated, and which the Book of Acts records. Beyond all doubt, it was the desire of the Master, as intimated from the first to His apostles, that the new should grow out of and fit into the old; that the Church should be an enlargement and spiritualisation of the synagogue; that it should start from a Jewish source, and have a Jewish centre or nucleus. Preaching was to begin at Jerusalem. The scene at Pentecost brought out the primary plan according to which the chosen nation was to fulfil its mission, and to grow and expand, so as to gather around it, in one great world-

wide communion, all tribes and tongues, even "the multitude innumerable out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." So the gospel would have been propagated, and the Church catholic would have been formed, if Israel had known the day of her visitation and accepted her high commission. But rulers, priests, and people successively rejected the offer, and set themselves against the religion of the cross. Then there sprang up, at Antioch in Syria, what was a new thing under the sun, a Gentile community of believers, composed from its very origin of Gentiles, and having a purely Gentile character; and the great apostle of the Gentiles, sent for by Barnabas the "good," dropping his Hebrew name Saul for the Gentile form of it, Paul, began his ministry, making the Syrian Antioch his headquarters, and from thence, upon a Gentile footing, establishing and extending the Christian Church. For a time there might thus seem to be two centres, Jerusalem and Antioch. But soon what holds of Jerusalem drops out of view and disappears from the stage, under a doubtful cloud, it is alleged, of departure more or less from the faith; and substantially, to all intents and purposes, the Church beginning at the Gentile city, and wearing the Gentile guise, occupies the field. So the spiritual kingdom passes out of the hands of Israel into the hands of the Gentiles, and the times of the Gentiles begin to run.*

Now, whatever good may have come out of this

* This view is brought out, with admirable fulness and clearness, by Baumgarten, in his most valuable "Apostolic History," or Commentary on the Acts, of which a Translation has been published by the Messrs. Clark, in their "Foreign Theological Library," 1864.

evil—for surely it was an evil—however he who is the Church's Divine Head, and Head over all things to the Church, may have overruled for gracious ends this inevitable result of Jewish unbelief—it might have been anticipated that it would entail on the Christian cause certain drawbacks and disadvantages. It made a wider and more violent breach, or wrench, between the old form of the covenant and the new, than had been originally contemplated according to the original ideal. It severed, more than had been intended, the two Testaments. It was fitted to break the line of connection and continuity between the less and the more spiritual—the less and the more perfect—economies or dispensations, which otherwise, if the primary plan could have been carried out, might have become clearer, brighter, and more beautiful, as the Holy Spirit more and more removed the veil from off the face of Moses, and exhibited the foreshadowing likeness of his features to those of Christ. Doubtless, Christianity has suffered loss from this cause. In particular, I cannot help thinking that we may trace to this source a tendency, which has from of old prevailed and prevails perhaps too much even to the present day, to see antagonism where there is agreement, difference where there is substantial identity, variance where there is harmony. May it not be one of the benefits which Paul anticipates as likely to flow to the world from Israel's restoration that then this untoward and, so to speak, abnormal state of things shall cease? For then, the grand original design or ideal may be realised, and the unity of God's mighty plan of providence and grace, through all the stages of

its progress and development, may be seen at last conspicuously and gloriously demonstrated.

But I must not dwell on this theme, although it has, I think, an important bearing on the subject I am now handling. We may thus account for the defective and erroneous views of the Fathers, as on many points, so upon this of the continuity of the weekly Sabbatic institute, which, gradually rising in respect of spirituality, may be traced all along the advancing line of God's government and revelation. The reformers, too, while one and all of them maintained earnestly the primeval institution of the Sabbath at the creation, and its consequent permanent obligation, were led, by what we may call an inherited bias, to misapprehend somewhat the nature of the ordinance as Israel was commanded to obey it, and so to contrast it far too strongly with the free and happy Resurrection-day which it is the joy of Christians to observe, in memory of the risen Lord they love.

The honour was reserved for the Puritans and Presbyterians to be the first to go straight to the foun tain of all truth, and draw pure water from thence alone; to ask simply what does Scripture teach? And what has been the issue so far as our own country is concerned? In England, not among extreme Calvinists and Evangelicals merely, but among the great body of the clergy and the laity, within as well as without the pale of the establishment, it came to be the all but unanimous conviction, —for the exceptions were inconsiderable in point of number at least, if not in point of weight and influence,—that from the beginning of the world the Sabbath, though subject to some outward changes of

form, continued to be virtually the same institution. Of course men held different views and adopted different practices as regards the way of keeping it. But as to the obligation of the day, and the ground of that obligation, there was really no material diversity of opinion. In Scotland, the unanimity was even more conspicuous. I say was. May I not say that it still is so? And soon will be so more and more! For despite some ugly signs, I cannot but entertain the hope that if only men will keep their temper, and have patience for a little, and not misapprehend one another, and calmly study some other books besides Cox and Hessey, we may see all go right in the end, and our brethren who have alarmed us, may probably come to be satisfied that the monster they are fighting against is, when rightly understood, not so very monstrous as they think, after all.

I cannot be expected to discuss in detail the Scriptural evidence. But I have a few remarks to offer on the sort of evidence that ought to satisfy a mind, really bent on knowing the Lord's will, as Scripture reveals it.

Dr. Hessey makes a very strong statement on this point. "We live," he says, "in an age in which the titles, so to speak, of our ordinances are examined into with most exact and juridical strictness. Men, rightly or wrongly, (for my part I believe rightly), demand that no weaker evidence should be given of the right of the Lord's Day to succeed in whatever degree, to the hours of the Sabbath, than of the right of a family to possess the temporal honours or the estates of a family which has preceded it."* As is usual, when

* Page 18.

a man ventures on an extreme position, he is not consistent with himself. For he says in his next Lecture, speaking of the evidence of his theory of the apostolical, and therefore, at second hand, the divine origin of "the Lord's day." "This," its being called the Lord's day, "I think will at least amount to a high probability that the day would be chosen by the apostles as characteristic of the New Dispensation, and to an evidence that it was so chosen. At any rate, if we may judge from parallel instances, it is all that the nature of the case allows."* I accept this last rule or principle as utterly subversive of the former; which indeed I hold to be in the highest degree unreasonable and presumptuous. We have no right to stipulate beforehand the kind or amount of evidence which God must give us, or which we will accept. And in the present instance the demand is especially absurd. If "the temporal honours or the estates of a preceding family" exist as realities, and must be transmitted,—which is our case,—so that the law must somehow and somewhere find a legitimate inheritor; the question as to evidence is surely materially affected by that consideration. But apart from that, and taking a more serious view of Dr. Hessey's principle, I think it altogether inconsistent with any right apprehension of the manner of God in revealing himself and his mind to his intelligent creatures. He does not deal with us as a grammar-school master might deal with his scholars in the lowest form. He does not proceed on the assumption of our needing chapter and verse for everything; so that whatever we are to believe must be told us in express terms, and

* Page 38. See also page 68.

whatever we are to do must be categorically laid down. Nor does he treat us as persons who can be held in only with bit and bridle ; who can take no hint and draw no inference ; but must have proof enough to satisfy or silence the most perverse litigant, or the most petty-fogging of his counsel. On the contrary, the very law of revelation is that it at once appeals to, and puts to the proof, our good sense and our good faith ; and that too, in a large, liberal and generous sense. The Revealer would carry us along with him, intelligently and sympathizingly, in all his revelations. And he trusts us. He trusts to our intelligence and sympathy to gather his mind and enter into it, as we watch his onward march and movements in the revealed course of his providence, and listen to the explanations, which not always, but from time to time, he articulately gives.

Thus, at the creation, we have the sacred rest of the seventh day sanctioned by divine example, not by express precept ; just as in the same manner, at the resurrection of Christ, we have the first day similarly sanctioned in its stead. This mode of sanctioning the observance of the day is admitted in the second of these instances, by some who question its applicability to the first. Dr. Hessey, for example, claims for the Lord's day a divine authority on the ground of the practice of the inspired apostles ; for he thinks there is sufficient proof of their having set apart the first day of the week for worship and rest. He puts the obligation of the Lord's day on that footing. In so doing, he goes beyond what most of those who think along with him would allow ; for generally they demur to the idea of there being

anything more in the New Testament notices of the first day of the week, than what indicates and warrants the appointment of it, as a day of sacred repose, by ordinary ecclesiastical authority, and on the ground of ecclesiastical expediency. So far I agree with them. If it is the setting up of an entirely new institution that is in question, I doubt very much if the "seven texts usually adduced from Scripture to prove the transference of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first," and adduced also by Dr. Hessey with a totally different purpose,* will really serve his purpose. These texts are, first those recording our Lord's appearances to the disciples on the day of his resurrection, and on the first day of the week following; secondly, that which fixes the Pentecostal miracle to the first day of the week; and thirdly, those which incidentally refer to the first day of the week as having associated with it, in apostolic practise, coming together to break bread, or "to eat the Lord's Supper," (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 20); almsgiving, or laying up in store for almsgiving, (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2); "assembling together" for worship and fellowship, (Heb. x. 25); and "being in the spirit," (Rev. i. 10.)

Now, I freely allow, or rather strenuously hold, that these notices are amply sufficient to prove inspired, Apostolic, and therefore Divine authority, for some slight modification of an existing institution, such as the change of day involves; all the rather, if the change commends itself to the intelligent and spiritual mind as an appropriate and all but necessary indication of the higher stage into which creation-work has come, in virtue of the new creation

* Page 37.

which the Lord's resurrection has at once consummated and inaugurated. But I agree with those who think —and they are this author's own friends—that for the bringing in of an entirely new ordinance, as of divine authority, these scanty and indirect references are but poor supports indeed.

Let them be taken, however, as the last links in a long chain of historical proof, and let the proof be estimated according to the ordinary way in which God communicates his mind to man by revelation, so as to lay man under obligation to himself. Then we have a consistent, progressive plan.

The creation of this world is cast into the mould or fashion of six days of work, followed by a day of rest. I care not here for any question as to the length of the divine days, or the nature of the divine rest; save only to remark that it could be no rest of mere inactivity, but only one of satisfaction and joy in a finished good. This arrangement of the Creator, which could not be meant for his own sake, but must have been adopted in accommodation to man, is made known to him from the beginning. There is no formal precept or command connected with it; as there is no formal precept or command about marriage, connected with the circumstance of a single pair being found alone together; there is simply the fact discovered, that God created man, male and female. Such a mode of dealing with his intelligent creatures, by means of express orders, would have been inappropriate. What God reveals to them of his own doings, is a sufficiently authoritative rule. As such, it is owned and obeyed.

True, the record of the observance of the primeval Sabbath between the creation and the Exodus is very

meagre; nor is this to be wondered at; for it did not fall within the scope and compass of the brief patriarchal narrative, which is rather to trace the progress of the chosen seed, and of the divine discoveries regarding it, than to notice customary religious usages. Still, there are traces of stated worship, and stated times of worship. And in spite of all special pleading to the contrary, I confess I still incline to think that the reckoning of time by weeks, to whatever extent it prevailed, is better accounted for by the Sabbatic institute, than by any natural periodical movement of the heavenly bodies. The very circumstance of this way of reckoning time being, however extensive, still only partial, confirms this view; for if it had the other origin, why was it not universal? And the decade system of the first French Revolution may suggest the probability of partial, and even considerable deviations from the weekly order, being the fruit of growing heathenism.

Descending from the patriarchal we come to the Levitical economy. And there we find the Sabbath, after the unavoidable disuse implied in the Egyptian bondage, rather revived as an old ordinance than instituted as a new one, and taking its place in the one only code written by the Lord's own fingers, and stored in his holiest shrine. All down the stream of prophecy we trace this institution, not as one among the ritual and ceremonial ordinances, whose observance the prophets often seemed to disparage, but as lying in the very heart of vital godliness, and being the symbol at once and the means of true religious reformation and revival.*

* See Isaiah lviii., and similar passages in Jeremiah and the other prophets.

Through the whole teaching of the great Teacher it passes, repeatedly vindicated and exalted to the highest point of divine benevolence; never once with any hint of its being designed to pass away. And instantly on his rising from the grave in which he lay, as not destroying, but fulfilling and satisfying the law, it is baptized with the new wine which he drinks with us in his kingdom; and,—honoured first by his own fellowship with his chosen ones,—sealed thereafter by his Spirit's pentecostal grace,—it stands, attested by inspired apostolic example, the same as when a still more divine example hallowed it at first; to continue the same till the end of time.

In some such manner, as I humbly think, the evidence on this subject should be combined and weighed. It is of an inductive character and historically cumulative. And to one considering it as a whole, and not committed to the demand of mere categorical imperatives, it is on that very account, as being in accordance with the usual manner of God, all the more convincing and conclusive.

But did not the institution of the weekly Sabbath, as it formed a part of Judaism, and took its place practically among the other formal ordinances of that typical and symbolical religion, partake, more or less, of the ritual character belonging generally to its worship? So the Reformers for the most part thought. They always, however, drew a distinction, between what they held to be merely ritual in the Institution, and therefore temporary, and what they maintained to be moral, and of original and permanent obligation. I find this briefly and clearly brought out in Calvin's Catechism, which was in use among

us in the early days of our Scottish Reformation. On the Fourth Commandment, the question is put (168), "Are we bound, by God's commandment, to refrain one day in the week from all manner of labour?" The answer is, "This commandment hath a certain special consideration in it; for, as touching the observation of bodily rest, it belongeth to the ceremonial law, which was abolished at the coming of Christ," (169.) "Sayest thou, then, that this commandment belongeth peculiarly to the Jews, and that God did give it only for the time of the Old Testament?" "Yea, verily, as touching the ceremony thereof." (170.) "Why, then, is there any other thing contained in it besides the ceremony?" "There be three considerations, why this commandment was given." (171), "What are they?" "The first is, that it might be a figure to represent our spiritual rest; the second, for a comely order to be used in the church; and, thirdly, for the refreshing of servants." Again, as to the reason given in the Fourth Commandment for keeping the Sabbath, the Catechism asks: (171.) "What is meant by that which the Lord allegeth here, saying that it behoveth us to rest, for so much as he hath done the same?" "When God created all his works in six days, he appointed the seventh to the consideration of his works. And to the intent we might be more stirred thereto, he setteth forth his own example unto us, because there is nothing so much to be desired as to be like him." "Must we then daily meditate the works of God? or is it enough to have mind of them one day in the week?" "Our duty is to be exercised daily therein; but for our weakness' sake there is one

certain day appointed. And this is that politick (comely) order of which I spake."*

Plainly the idea is that in the Jewish Economy, the mere bodily rest of the Sabbath was a capital element of its sacredness, that it was symbolical and significant of Gospel rest; so that when the substance came the foreshadowing image passed away. I think it is an error to put that construction, even partially, on the Sabbath, as ordained in the Fourth Commandment. At all events, it savours of over-refining, in the interpretation of a clear and broad law, and in point of fact, in Calvin's own country, it soon opened the door to far looser views. At the same time, it may be admitted that, being actually associated in practice with other Sabbatical arrangements and ritual observances in the worship of Israel, the weekly Sabbaths did come, at least in popular estimation, to be viewed as kindred and analogous services; and might, therefore, for certain purposes of evangelical teaching, be not improperly classed with holidays and new moons, "which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col. ii. 16-17.) This, as it would seem, is a sufficiently satisfactory explanation of the incidental allusion of which so much is often made; although I cannot help thinking that Paul's meaning reaches higher.

The apostle is not, in that passage, discussing the subject of set times and modes of worship. He is thinking of something altogether different. He is insisting and dwelling on the spiritual standing of believers, as crucified with Christ and risen with him.

* See "Catechisms of the Scottish Reformation," edited by Dr Horatius Bonar. London: Nisbet & Co., 1866.

As crucified with Christ, they are dead to all legal ordinances and formal observances. These have now no power to enslave, because they have no right to judge or condemn them. Risen with Christ, they have a life which sets at defiance their tyranny and judgment: "a life hid with Christ in God." Are they to forego or compromise this liberty of acceptance and peace with God, on the footing of free grace and perfect righteousness, on which in Christ they now stand? No; not at the summons of any ordinances, be they ever so sacred or ever so salutary; least of all at the summons of ordinances which, for any virtue they might ever have—to give, in symbol, any spiritual grace,—have passed away. Such, I apprehend, is Paul's reasoning; and being such, it really does not require him to be very careful as to what ordinances he names as specimens. Nay, it is reasoning which will apply in full force to ordinances that are still of divine authority; to Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Lord's-Day; insomuch that if at any time I saw a Christian brother suffering the observance of the Lord's-day to come in between him and God's free grace; keeping the holy Sabbath in a legal frame of mind or in the spirit of bondage; I could almost find it in my heart to address him in the bold words of Luther, and bid him work, or play, or dance, or do anything with all its hours; rather than let it become an occasion of servilely working out a righteousness of his own; or mar the simplicity of his sole and single reliance on the perfect righteousness of Christ and the sovereign love of God.

Here let me notice a fallacy, for the most part latent, which is apt to confuse or obscure our views of the

relations between the Jewish and the Christian dispensations. In comparing or contrasting them, we very often look at the Mosaic system generally, and at the Sinaitic covenant in particular, as they practically told upon the mass of the people, carnal and unbelieving. To them the whole took the form of what we call the covenant of works; the natural covenant, under which all men, prior to grace, are; the covenant requiring perfect and personal obedience, and promising life on that condition: Do this and live. To the nation at large the whole economy, including the moral and ceremonial parts alike, took very much that character, and was viewed merely as declaring and enjoining the terms on which they were to possess the land of their inheritance. So viewed, it cannot be put in too strong opposition to the economy of the gospel. But Paul does not so view it in his Epistle to the Galatians. It is not the fair view to take of it. We should rather regard it in the light in which it appeared to those of the people who were spiritual men—Israelites indeed. Taught by the Spirit, they could not fail to see that, whatever else it might be, the transaction at Sinai was not meant to be, and was not really, the ratifying of any form of the covenant of works; that it proceeded on the footing, not of works, but of grace; that it was, in fact, the renewal or fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. The very first words uttered by Jehovah proclaimed salvation by grace alone. Any new covenant given on Sinai must necessarily be supplemental merely to that prior one; it cannot possibly be subversive of it.* Hence true

* This whole topic is most satisfactorily handled by Dr Fairbairn in his Typology. See especially his chapters on the Sabbath and on the Law.

believers under the old dispensation found and felt themselves to be living under an economy of free grace, and realised salvation as not of works, but of faith. In what was ceremonial, they saw the day of Christ afar off, and were glad. In what was moral, they welcomed the directory and the means of a free and holy walking with God. The law was written in their hearts; it was their delight; it was to them the law of liberty, the law of love.

The difference in this matter between them and us who believe now is entirely one of degree and not at all of kind; it is like the difference between the restricted freedom of the son and heir in his minority, and his larger freedom when he comes of age. (Galatians iii., iv.) And, as an intelligent, docile, loving child may be seen, even in his non-age, enjoying much of the enlargement of his riper years,—so, many of the saints of old reached a height of spiritual emancipation to which, alas! too few of us aspire; and might quite as safely as any of us have dispensed with outward, objective, authoritative law. But that was not in all their thoughts, nor should it be in ours.

For in all ages, and under all modes of dealing with him on the part of his Creator, three things are necessary to the true and acceptable obedience of a reasonable creature. These three things are motive, power, and rule—an impelling motive, an enabling power, an authoritative rule. In the case of man, everywhere and always, these must be of God—the motive, God's love; the power, God's grace; the rule, God's law. The motive and the power will not suffice; no, not in the holiest of us all. To teach

otherwise is unwittingly to pave the way, and it is a short and easy way, to the utmost license of the worst antinomianism. The three factors I have named as entering into all real obedience—motive, power, and authoritative rule—may bear different proportions, as it were, in different dispensations, and among different men under the same dispensation. If God's love is only dimly known, and comparatively in shadow, and if God's grace—the grace of his Almighty Spirit—is granted only in comparatively small measure, his commanding law may bulk more prominently, and be more obviously needful, than when his love is more fully revealed and more largely shed abroad in the heart, and his Holy Spirit is more freely given, and works more energetically. But I doubt if even in heaven there can be service or obedience without objective law; and that, too, law not merely pointing out duty, but enjoining it; law felt, however it may be made known, to be speaking from without, from above, and speaking with authority. Nor is this all. If the obedience is to be perfect, the law must be perfect. Not only must the motive and the power be perfect—perfectly sufficient; which they are, being God's full love and his omnipotent grace; but the rule must be perfect—perfectly complete;—which it is, being the law of the ten commandments. That law alone is perfect; no other law on earth, no other law given under heaven among men, is or ever was. It omits no duty; it leaves unregulated no department of life, inner or outer. Read in the light of the tenth commandment, as Paul teaches us to read it (Rom. vii.) —the commandment which goes into man's inmost spirit, and gives its own spiritual character to all the

rest—it is all holy, and just, and good. It is perfect. But you cannot say that of it if the fourth commandment is to be dropped out. For then there is a duty for which no rule is given, a duty which the natural conscience and natural religion alike acknowledge—the duty of setting apart a sufficient portion of our time for rest, refreshment, meditation, worship. What is a sufficient portion for any man, and how it is to be secured to all men, the law leaves all at sea. Therefore it ceases to be perfect, and the possibility of perfect obedience ceases too.

Does not this consideration go far to shew that the positive part of the precept, fixing the very thing needing to be fixed,—naming the day, and naming it authoritatively for all mankind alike,—is really after all not so distinguishable, at least not so separable, from the moral, as we sometimes take it to be? It enters into the heart's core of the commandment, and is indeed of its very essence. Nor is this a peculiarity of the fourth commandment alone; the seventh stands in the very same predicament. That precept also has a positive part; it has in its very bosom what is matter of positive divine appointment quite as much as the weekly Sabbath—the ordinance of marriage. In fact, a very close parallel or analogy may be traced between these two commandments. They both alike proceed upon positive divine institutions, not, as it seems to me, discoverable by the light of nature, not capable of being enforced by any natural law. Marriage is God's ordinance for securing our purity. The Sabbath is his ordinance for securing his own worship. And notwithstanding the element of positive ordination in

both, they are both alike essentially moral, and have their proper place in the perfect moral law.

I cannot close without a few words about the teaching of the great Master on this subject. I suppose I may assume, as what will not now be called in question, that in all his teaching with regard to it, he is interpreting and not modifying the existing Sabbath Law. He is vindicating it, as he vindicated other commandments, as for instanee, the third, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, against the false glosses put upon it, and the misapplications made of it, by the Pharisees. He is not altering or relaxing it. As the Messiah, the Son of Man, he had no commission, no authority, and indeed, to speak with reverence, no right to do so. He does, indeed, in that character, claim to be Lord of the Sabbath; but not in any other sense than that in which David was lord of the shewbread when he used it, in his necessity, for common food, and the priests were lords of the Sabbath, when, for the higher services of the Temple, they did work that, in ordinary circumstances, would have been accounted a profanation of the holy day. The Lord claims for himself, and for all men, a lordship over the Sabbath, to the effect of being entitled, and indeed bound, to make what is matter of positive institution about it give way, when a more paramount duty of the same sort, still more when a duty of a purely moral nature, or the duty of meeting a case of necessity, comes into collision with it. There is here no setting aside of the Sabbath law, but a magnifying of it and making it honourable. And it is with the Mosaic Sabbath law that he deals, the law of the Fourth Commandment; placing it on its right footing; expounding its true

meaning. For one thing, he negatives the idea of there being any virtue or sanctity in mere bodily resting on the Sabbath; thus cutting away the ground, as I think, from under Calvin and others, who held that to be one element of the Jewish Sabbath. The rest enjoined he shows to be compatible with activity in serving God and doing good to men.

But I do not dwell on the Lord's teaching as to what the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment really was, and how it was to be kept. Nor do I insist on the argument for the universality of the Sabbath Institute, founded on the great maxim, the charter of moral liberty, "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." Notwithstanding the objection that that is not the precise point of the Lord's teaching,—since it is simply the relation between the Sabbath and whoever may be bound to keep it that he is dealing with—I still think that his putting his pithy apothegm so widely and generally means something. Otherwise, why might he not have said "The Sabbath was made for you, and not you for the Sabbath." I consider him to have the whole human family in his view when he utters his wide and broad proclamation, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."

But passing from that argument, I wish to point out again another noticeable fact about his teaching, to which I have already cursorily adverted. Often as he is obliged to speak of the Sabbath, he never once drops a hint as to its being abolished or superseded. On the contrary he assumes its continuance; at least his language is far more easily reconcileable with that idea than with the other.

And this argument will be greatly strengthened if we look at his teaching on another subject. He has occasion to speak of the place of worship, the Temple; not so often as of the day of worship, the Sabbath, but yet more than once. In conversing with the Samaritan woman he does so. And how does he do so? First, he states and applies the existing law about the place of worship. But immediately after, he takes care to announce the coming change, the abrogation of the ordinance conferring sanctity on one place more than on another. How much pains also does he take to prepare the minds of the disciples for the destruction of the Temple—virtually in his death, and literally some short time after—and the substitution of himself when risen, as coming instead of it, and of all its services? Does not this anxious plain speaking about the superseding of the place of worship, contrast strangely with the entire silence about the superseding of the day of worship. Does it not give to that silence a meaning and force not to be resisted? He very explicitly and very earnestly announces that the ordinance of the place of worship is to be abolished. But, often as he is called to explain the ordinance of the day of worship, he never once utters a single syllable pointing in the direction of its ceasing or being superseded. In any teacher, aware of the Mosaic Sabbath being about to expire, such a mode of dealing with it would be held to be unaccountable, or something worse. In him who had to prepare his followers for the new kingdom, it is, as I view it, simply and utterly inconceivable. If the institution was to continue, with some slight outward change, yet in substance the same, there was no need

of any express intimation to that effect. And good reasons might be shewn for our Lord and his apostles abstaining from any very formal and peremptory injunctions on the whole subject, and trusting rather to the effect of authoritative precedent. In the state of society in which the truth was to be preached and the Church planted among all nations, it must have been found altogether impossible to obtain or to enforce the universal observance of a weekly day of rest; and to have made that a matter of absolute and indispensable command would have been to clog the chariot of the gospel with a most serious obstacle indeed. It is a proof of holy, heavenly wisdom and love, that the Sabbath, as the Lord's day, was made to pass, as it were, silently from the old economy into the new, and left to establish itself, as it gradually did, upon the authority of divine example, in the consciences and hearts of Christians. I say, divine example. For in the view of all the Lord's previous teaching about the nature of the Sabbath, and his significant silence about its cessation, his two appearances to his disciples before he finally left the world—the first on the very day when he completed his new creation work, and the second on the weekly return of that day—must, I think, have been felt to be decisive as to what, in this matter, he would have them to do.

I have left no room for any practical applications of my subject, or any discussion of the practical questions that may be raised about the right way of observing and the right way of protecting the Sabbath. I conclude with the closing words of Dr Fairbairn's article.

"A connection, such as we believe to exist, and have briefly indicated, between Christianity and the earliest

dispensations of God, involves the permanence of whatever is properly original, inherent in the nature of things, adapted to man's state generally, or necessary to *his physical and moral well-being.* Such a connection, therefore, requires, in regard to the special subject now under consideration, the perpetual obligation of a weekly Sabbath, to be withdrawn from worldly occupations, and devoted mainly to higher purposes."

"But as the Christian economy was an advance on the Jewish, the same connection involves also superficial differences in mere adjuncts and accompaniments. It therefore admits of and even requires such circumstantial alterations as have actually taken place in the Lord's day, as compared with the Jewish Sabbath; in particular, a change of day from the last to the first day of the week, to adapt it to the new phase of the divine economy, which began with the resurrection of Christ; in consequence of which, Sabbaths, or what had become distinctively Jewish Sabbaths, fell away, that the Lord's day might remain radiant with the spiritual life, with the serene and heavenly yet active and beneficent genius of the gospel of Christ."

"Cast aside the sacred design and character of the day, break its connection (in respect to the *substance* of the appointment) with the Sabbaths interwoven with the beginnings of the world's history, and enshrined in the moral legislation of Moses; place it simply on the footing of ecclesiastical sanction, or even of apostolical usage and example, we believe that you thereby strike at the root of its obligation; you remove it from the one foundation on which alone it can get a proper hold of men's consciences, and lay it

as a comparatively defenceless citadel at the mercy of the world. Men, even men not altogether or avowedly unchristian, will feel that the day is in some sense their own, and the demands of pleasure first, then of drudging, toiling business to meet these demands, will grow and multiply on every hand. No legislative enactments nor well-meant efforts of Christian philanthropy will be able to arrest the evil. It is the knowledge and belief of God's word that alone can secure the observance of His day."

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